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England all the

also by James Turle

THE ENGLAND I LOVE BEST

With Wood Engravings by Eileen Turle

Truth "Let me commend Mr. Turle's fascinating little book to all country lovers. If they do not surrender unconditionally to its charm, I shall be surprised."

Tablet "This book, with its admirable woodcuts, is one which lovers of England will want to keep."

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Sunday Times "Mr. Turle writes charmingly and simply of the hills and dales and streams and people of Southern England."—A. G. STREET.



THE LAME COBBLER

From a Pencil Drawing by Eileen Turle

ENGLAND
ALL THE WAY

by

JAMES TURLE

*Author of "The England
I Love Best"*

With Frontispiece by Eileen Turlé

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1936

TO
All good Physicians—Fishermen—
and Friends

Let your hook always be cast : in the
stream where you least expect it there
will be a fish.

OVID

Preface

THERE is a man I know well, and for whose opinions I have the greatest respect, but I do not see him as often as I should like. Owing to his work—for he is a Night-Watchman employed by a well-known firm of Contractors—he is very often a long time away, and even if he is working close by, I can, of course, only see him in the evening.

So long was it since we had met, that I had indeed wondered if he had gone for good; but one evening in late August, when the long hot summer was drawing to a close, I came upon him quite unexpectedly within a short distance of my house.

“It’s a long time,” said the Night-Watchman, “a long time since I seen you.”

“A very long time,” said I. “Where have you been to?”

“Surrey,” he answered, “spoiling a little more of old England, leastways my mates was.”

He leant back against his upturned barrow and sighed.

“You been away again?” he asked presently.

“No,” said I.

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"What, not in three years?" he said quickly.

"No," said I again.

"Short o' money?" he inquired sympathetically.

"Not more than usual," I replied; "doctors knocked off my walking."

He whistled softly, then he took out his pipe, tapped it very very gently against his boot, pressed down what was left, filled it from a flat tin and lit it—just as he had always lit it.

"Did I ever tell you," he asked, "why I'm a watchman?"

"No," I answered.

"Heart," he said quietly. "Harley Street specialist, friend of my panel doctor, half-hour or more he were a-listening and a-tapping: then 'Good day,' he says all sort of solemn like. Never see a bloke what smiled less. 'Good day,' he says again, 'I'll write to your doctor.' 'Can I go to work?' I says. 'No,' he says. 'Can I go for a holiday?' I says. 'No,' he says. 'What can I do?' I says. "Orspital," he says. 'Is it my heart?' I says—taken aback. 'Not altogether,' he says solemn like. 'Is it my lungs?' I says. 'Not altogether,' he says, more solemn. 'Is it my art'ries?' I says. 'Not altogether,' he says, more solemn than ever. 'Well, what is it?' I says. 'The whole blooming lot of 'em,' he says and never smiled, not once, he didn't."

"Eleven years ago," he went on, "that's when it were, but I'm still here anyway."

He got up and put two or three little pieces of wood under his kettle.

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"How's the missus?" I asked.

"Fine, thank you, shade stouter though. . . . Came out of that house I did, walked down that there Harley Street feeling like a corpse; people looked at me pitying like.

"One old feller selling primroses—April it was, but cold and snowing a little—"Primroses?" he asks. 'Primroses!' I thought, 'shan't never see them a-blowing no more down Devonshire way!' 'Primroses?' he says again. "Ere, cheer up, chum," he says, "them doctors don't know everythink!" Kind sort of old feller he looked.

"Well, I'd put two tanners into my side pocket to have a couple of pints with when I come out, but I didn't want no beer now, 'twould have choked me. 'Here you are,' I says. 'No you don't,' he says, handing one back, 'you go and have one with me; you looks as you needs it,' and right or wrong I had it and it done me no harm neither."

.

The kettle began to sing—and then to boil; he got up and put some tea in the same old teapot.

"Pleased to see you again," he said presently as he handed me my cup. "It's a bit hot, so hold it steady. Writing another book?"

"Not yet," I told him.

"Well then, why don't you? You can't go travelling and write about that, same as you done before, but you can sit in your garden and potter about these old lanes—as long as they *is* lanes, and then write something of what you seen in days gone by. Something for

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folks to read as can't go walking at all, and got no garden. Got my meaning?"

"Not quite," said I.

"Well, there's lots of people as have to do same as I do, night times, just sit down and kind of close their eyes and think of wild roses and such in the hedges without seeing them. Then there's gipsy camps and trampers and robins and honey bees and all kinds of flowers. I often think of those funny old Lords-and-ladies, as we call them, and all the berries in September, and then right along the top of the highest hedges, all glowing and a-glistening and a-waving in the early mornings when there's been a bit of frost, or the dew's as heavy as can be—there's Old-man's-beard, that's my favourite of all.

"There now, write a book about all that, write about all you've seen and done, and old towns and rivers and such, for them as can't go about. . . . Are you going to have a try?"

"Yes," said I, "I think I will."

"That's right," he said, smiling as he reached for his teapot. "Write about old England, English roads and English fields. Give us a little more of England. . . . England all the way. What's it to be this time?"

"What you've just said," I answered.

He looked at me a bit doubtfully and then he laughed. "I've got you," he said. "I know what you mean . . . England all the way, ain't it?"

"England all the way," said I.

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CHAPTER I

TRAVELLER'S JOY AND ROSEMARY

THERE are two ways by which you can have "Traveller's Joy," but I know which one you would choose. Still, there are two ways, and if perchance you cannot have the one, the other is left for you to take if you think it is worth the taking. Only a shadow, perhaps, but better than nothing at all. For the first way is the old way, the real way, that leads you from your door, down the road, and over a stile and through the woods and on . . . over the hills and far away.

And the second way?

Well, that may be new for you, for this way you stay at home with a book in your hands and a map on your knees, and with never a hill to climb nor a stream to ford . . . in reality.

And because there are many who have had the old old way and now can wander no more, I have tried to write something that may help to pass the time for all those who love old lanes, and paths, and half-forgotten towns, but who are unable to see them now—just as the Night-Watchman said. And because I have had much "Traveller's Joy" and because I, too, have had to sit with old books and well-worn maps

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in front of me, tracing out journeys across heaths and bridges and fords and hills: journeys which I knew I could not take—I know exactly how you feel.

So I hope that a little of what I am going to write may bring with it just one thing, if nothing more, and that is the memory of happy days in England.

And as that memory is the greatest joy of all, I have called this first chapter "Traveller's Joy and Rosemary." And should there be but one who reads this who asks "Why Rosemary?" I answer "For Remembrance."

.

So if you cannot go out into the country places: if, as I say, the little lanes and winding paths across the hills will wind and turn and climb unseen by you—and those level paths along the rivers wander on from field to field without you—yet they are not really lost, not all lost.

For when the mist lies deep along the valley, when the rain comes beating and driving against your windows, or when the snow drifts on across the North Downs to the sea, you may see those little roads and lanes once more. For that is one of the charms of England, that once you have seen and loved a place you can call it back to you again, always.

Here where the first cowslip stood in April, there where the harebell hung her dainty head, you see them still.

Under that bridge the kingfisher darted, flying straight and true, one glorious line of colour made more glorious by his rapid passing. By that bank the larks

Traveller's Joy and Rosemary

were busy with the dust they love so well, and here the blackbird, once in summer, lay with outstretched wing towards the sun. You see them all.

Sandy wastes with scanty heather, or pastures, poor from a farmer's view, have seemed to you both rich and beautiful when you found that tiny harebell, the first one of the year. I think it is in July and early in July you find them first, and I never saw the first one any year without wondering whether it should really be hair-bell or hare-bell.

For men say that it is called hare-bell because it grows on heaths and sandy soils where hares are fond of playing, or hair-bell because of the tiny stem that looks as slight as hair. Who can tell?

And one learned man I know, a man who can tell you almost anything, will have it that both are wrong, and that it is really heather-bell, called "ha'er" for short.

And Scotchmen? Do they not say that it is their own indeed, the bluebell of Scotland? The bluebell of Scotland that the old song sings of and of which everybody knows the tune. Not the English bluebell, of course, for we English are not so correct as the Scotch, for we call our wild hyacinth a bluebell.

And the fairy-folk? What do they call them? They call them "Love-Bells," and I will tell you why—because they write their love-letters with beautiful blue ink made from squeezing the juice of harebells: and into which they dip their tiny pens.

At least that is what an old lady in the New Forest told me ever so many years ago, but I have never tried it yet, and whether they are hair or hare or heather

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they were always a joy to find, even by the side of a road on a dusty highway—a wayfarer's friend indeed.

And it is not only the flowers that call you back again along the old roads; one day, any day, someone may come to your door who will bring back a memory. The name of some well-loved river or the sudden memory of some old smile of wayside friendliness will set you off along that path you knew so long ago.

And then—although you cannot see it—the same old spot, the same out-of-the-way place will be just the same to you.

Not merely a name in a list of English towns or villages or hills, but a name that is loved—Somerton—Camelford—Stow-on-the-Wold—every place is loved by someone.

I am quite sure that there is not a single town or village in England that someone does not love.

Someone somewhere in some great town or city is thinking of a tiny village, or someone abroad is thinking of some place in England.

Even great manufacturing towns—ugly to you and me, perhaps—coal-mining centres, cotton-factory towns, are loved by someone.

Places like Leeds, Keighley, Oldham, and even Wigan are loved.

Long ago I met a man who loved Wigan and who told me that the country round about was glorious. When the time came for me to see it I was surprised that so much could still be left. In these days of wireless no doubt the old jokes about Wigan have been taken into hundreds and thousands of homes, homes where the old jokes had never been heard before.

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Lancashire comedians still bring in Wigan, yet although I do not listen to them I never hear or see the name without thinking of the man who loved Wigan—it was his home, and he was far away. Yes, they can go on making jokes about Wigan, but how many of them know that but for an accident of fate Wigan might have been a famous Spa—as well known as Harrogate?

Many years ago, I cannot tell you the exact date, but well over a hundred years, a wonderful mineral-water spring was discovered at Wigan. The water was analysed and the chalybeate and sulphurous quality of the spring was found to be the equal if not the superior of the famous Harrogate waters.

This spring was found in a field near Scholes Bridge.

The town authorities of Wigan built a Pump Room for those who came to drink the waters and baths were installed for the benefit of those who came here to take the baths.

Now if Wigan had not been drawn into the whirlpool of the cotton trade, if the discovery of this spring had not taken place at about the same time as the beginning of the industrial revolution with all its horrors of machinery and ugliness, Wigan might have been a world-famed health resort.

It was pleasantly situated, the hills and moors gave it a picturesque background, and the little river Douglas, on the banks of which it stood, was no doubt the home of trout when once that was a clear and pretty stream.

And although you may not believe what I am just about to write, I know that it is true.

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For when the time came that I was unable to go wandering, I wished, as I had to stay at home, that wandering men might come to my door now and again.

So I made my wish on the first day of the month, the first thing in the morning after I had said "Hares" overnight and "Rabbits" in the morning, without which no presents would come my way that month and no wishes could come true.

And since that day many wandering folk have called at my door and many people have I met near my house who have told me of out-of-the-way places, old towns, old houses, old times and of many old country things.

And because one of the first men I met was carrying an old-fashioned beehive or skep, as they call it, and as I remember that the Night-Watchman spoke about honey bees, and as I have just mentioned Rosemary, I will tell you what the old bee-keeper told me.

Of course he was old, for all bee-keepers are old or will be one day, because people who can keep bees always live to be old men and women, although it is a strange fact that you will find less women than men who keep bees.

Bee-keeping is not for everyone, it is not an art that can be acquired by everyone, it is a gift, a rare gift in which is combined a certain temperament that nothing can replace.

Well, this old man talked to me about honey and about bees and about the heather honey and lime-flower honey and hawthorn-and-apple honey. And the hawthorn-and-apple-blossom honey, he said, was the

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best of all, but you only got it in seasons when may and apples were flowering at the same time.

Then he went on to talk about white-clover honey, and I remembered honey that I used to enjoy as a boy called Narbonne honey, which they told me took its flavour from the white heather that grows round Narbonne, not far from the Mediterranean Sea.

And he told me—for he was a man well learned in all the lore of bees and honey—that this was not due to the white heather alone but to the flowers of rosemary, those pale blue flowers that are found only in sunny places. “And where,” he asked, “could you find a sunnier place than the country round Narbonne? There this rosemary grows on old rocks, and old castle walls which were built by the Romans, that is where this honey gets its fragrance from.”

And he went on to tell me of the ancient industry of bee-keeping, as old as agriculture itself or older, and of how he had read of a certain old Saxon who kept bees at Heathfield in Sussex before the Norman Conquest. I asked him where he had heard of this old Saxon, and he said he had read of him in a book, and if I liked he would lend it to me if he could.

And some weeks later he brought me, not the book, it is true, but an extract from that book which he had copied out for me: it was from a book which quoted a document from the old Saxon manuscripts in the British Museum, and what I read was this:—

“Hwitta Hatte was a keeper of bees at Haethnfelda, and Tate Hatte, his daughter, was the mother of Wulsige, the shooter;”

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then there followed a lot more about the Hatte family who lived at Heathfield in those old Saxon days, and it ended by saying

“Werlaff Hatte, the father of Werstan, was the rightful owner of Haethnfelda.”

And this reminded him that he had read also that some people would have it that Heathfield was thus really Hattes-field and had nothing to do with heather, and he asked me what I thought about it.

And I told him that I knew of many places in Somersetshire called Heathfield where the heather grew, and that the country people there called those places not Heathfield, but Herfell or Heffel, and he smiled and said, “That is what the old Sussex people called Heathfield and old men do so now. You must have heard of Heffel Fair in April, where the old woman lets the first cuckoo out of her bag?”

“Yes,” I said, “I have, and I wonder if there are any people called Hatte living near Heathfield now?”

.

I walked as far as my gate with him and he went down the road home to his bees and I have not seen him again, for he left for another county where there were more flowers for bees, for which I am sorry.

But I remember that as he went—and it was early October when the great grey clouds collect and the wind comes back again and makes you think of winter—I thought of the old Saxon bee-keeper and of

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Narbonne near the sunny Mediterranean, and of how that was the first Roman colony beyond the Alps on the great highway to Spain, and of all those who must have travelled along that way, and of the old Vikings or Northmen who sailed up the river and landed and plundered old Narbonne just as they raided and plundered our English coast.

.

The wind came sighing over my ash tree. I could hear a train coming up the long hill and puffing loudly as she did so—a long way away.

"Rain coming," said I to myself, and as I reached my door a few drops came pattering on to the step. Leaves, golden leaves of autumn, came floating down around me as if coming from all the trees at once. Only the old oak stood stiff and steady with barely a falling leaf.

"One more gale, old oak," I thought, "just one more gale coming," and the old tree, that was planted long before Nelson was fighting the French, seemed to stand out in the fading twilight as if looking towards the sea where so many of his family had gone before him so many years ago. And somehow this set me thinking of Nelson and Trafalgar and some of those old ships that took part in Trafalgar.

All oak, English oak. And from these my thoughts turned to an old farm I know where old ships' timbers are standing yet, after years and years at sea, and of two great oaks that once stood in Sheffield Park a hundred and fifty years ago or more, and of a Spanish ship called the *Santa de Elmanar*. And of these

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two old oaks, and a little of that old Spanish ship I will tell you in another chapter. Not the next one, because I want first of all to tell you about a pedlar who chanced to come my way and of what he told me.

CHAPTER II

THE PEDLAR—CHARLES DICKENS—AND THE HUNTINGDON OUSE

THE packhorse has gone for good, but pedlars are with us still. I have come across them in all sorts of out-of-the-way places carrying their odd collection of little things for sale. I do not mean the men who call with writing-pads and nothing more, but the real pedlars, men who hold a licence and carry many things to sell.

For every pedlar has to have a licence, which costs him five shillings a year and has to be renewed every year through the police. To become a pedlar you must be over seventeen and of good character—to remain a pedlar you must continue to be of good character, so that if a pedlar calls at your door and he has been a licensed pedlar for forty years, then I say he has a record of which any man might be proud.

Now of all the pedlars I have ever met, and I have talked with many, the most interesting of them all came up my garden path a few weeks ago. Sixty he was or more, slightly built, neatly dressed, rather bushy eyebrows and wearing spectacles.

He was carrying two bags: one upon his back, the other in front, the two being joined by a broad strap.

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The day was warm and he had taken off his hat, was indeed carrying it in his hand. "I wonder," he began in rather a pleasant voice, "I wonder if I have anything that would interest you."

He put his two bags upon the ground and then he opened the larger one, and the first thing I saw was a rather small book: an old book it looked.

"Do you sell books?" I asked.

"No," he said, "at least very seldom. I bought that a month ago; been reading it again, *Oliver Twist*—Dickens of course. I saw it in a secondhand shop—not a book shop. Cost me sixpence."

I picked it up and looked at it.

"It has been well looked after," I said.

"Yes," he agreed, "and I rather liked the leather back and the leather corners against the cloth. No, it's not so very old—1850, Chapman and Hall. *Oliver Twist* had been written about eleven years then. Half bound I think they call this."

"You are quite an authority on books," I put in.

"Not really," he replied, smiling, "but I've picked up odds and ends of things as I travel about. Now what can I sell you? Just the usual things, the ordinary stock in trade. Razor-blades, soap, creams, tooth-paste, combs, writing-paper, sealing-wax, nail brushes?"

I hesitated.

"Woolworths have made a lot of difference to us," he went on, "the women like going: still, I mustn't grumble. What about pencils now? . . ."

And when I had made one or two little purchases I looked at the book again.

The Pedlar

"It's a long time since I read any of Dickens', many people still read his books, though."

"They do, and they always will," said the little man. "Dickens will always live, and I'll tell you why, or what is my reason for thinking so. He will live because he was human and because he loved and wrote about the English country. Oh yes, I know what you're going to say: the same old thing everyone says—and true too—that he was the first writer to tell us of all the different types of Londoner. Well, so he did, but he wrote of the country too."

He paused and took a pipe out of his pocket and filled it, then he closed his bags and picked them up.

"What do they weigh?" I asked.

He handed them to me.

"Fifteen pounds?"

"Twenty-two," he answered, "and they seem to grow heavier on bad days. I must be going along . . ."

"Half a minute," I said; "would you care for a cup of tea? I was just going to have a cup myself and so I know the kettle's boiling."

"You're very kind," he said, hesitatingly.

"Come in," said I, "and bring your bags."

"Talking of Dickens," said the pedlar when he had finished his tea, "talking of Dickens, did you ever know what part of the country his family came from?"

"I'm afraid not," I confessed, "although I have an idea that his father was a clerk in the dockyard at Portsmouth."

"Quite true, in the Navy Office there," he agreed;

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"but where did his father come from, his family I mean?"

"I have no idea at all," said I.

"Educated man wasn't he? Charles Dickens' father I mean?"

"Must have been fairly educated," I agreed, "but I expect you could find it out in any Library. Isn't there a National Biography?"

"Very likely," he answered. "but I can't get my heart up high enough to go into any big Library. Well, now let me tell you a little thing I found out myself, quite by accident it was. That is if you'd care to hear it."

"By all means go ahead," said I.

"Well, some years ago I was in Huntingdonshire, not far from Huntingdon, at a place called Hemmingford Abbots, and I had a look round the old church. People say some of it dates back to King Canute, that's why I went in to look at it, but when I got there I found memorials to a family called Dickens.

"One of these Dickens—Charles Dickens—was rector of that little parish for nearly fifty years.

"Fancy that now, Charles Dickens—the Reverend Charles Dickens died in 1794 aged seventy-four. So he was born in 1720. Charles Dickens the author was born in 1812. I wonder if they were related? Interesting, isn't it? Ancestor of his perhaps."

"Very interesting indeed," I said at once. "Perhaps they were the same family."

"They may have been," he replied. "Pretty little place it was when I saw it, on the banks of the Ouse. I remember it well."

Charles Dickens

He got up from the seat, put his pipe in his pocket and . . . "I've been wasting your time," he said.

"The other way round," said I. "I have been wasting yours."

"Far from it, I've enjoyed our chat, and the right kind of enjoyment is never waste."

"Well, good-bye," said I. "You are a philosopher first and a pedlar second, and I hope if ever you come this way again that you will look me up."

"With pleasure," he said at once, "but I very seldom come the same way again for several years; still, if I do . . ."

"Please do," I said. "I've learnt a lot to-day."

He smiled. "Not very much I'm afraid, but every day one can learn something new. I had a very fair education. I went to a famous school which has turned out some of the greatest literary figures: but here I am a pedlar."

"Where was it?" I asked, "where did you go to school?"

"Lichfield," he answered, "where Dr. Johnson, Addison, Garrick, Wollaston and Ashmole were all educated, at the old grammar school. Good-bye."

So down my garden path went the pedlar with his two bags, the larger one on his shoulders and the smaller one in front, and as he went I wondered.

I wondered why he was a pedlar, an intelligent man, a man of quite good education obviously, and yet wandering from place to place making just a bare living.

Contented certainly, and with a quiet, calm,

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natural manner that many professional men might envy.

And as he went I thought again of what he had told me about Charles Dickens and of the Reverend Charles Dickens for nearly fifty years rector of Hemingford Abbots on the Huntingdon Ouse—from 1747 to 1794—nearly fifty years in that peaceful little village as indeed it must have been in those days. And sometimes I wonder if Charles Dickens was of that family, but I have not tried to find out: partly because it is several years since I was in a large library and partly, perhaps, because I like to think he was of that Huntingdon family and I do not want to find I am wrong. I like to think of Charles Dickens as having come from Hemingford Abbots—by descent.

When last I saw the Huntingdon Ouse it was very much the same as I had always known it, once one left the busy roads behind.

There were the meadows, the tall trees, the distant spires and the quiet flowing stream—all such as Charles Dickens would have loved. Did he see them?

Yes, I think he did, for here along this quiet river you still will find such a scene as the great writer so often makes us see in imagination.

Some such scene, as summer time along the Ouse, or early autumn along these quiet meadows, may very well have been known to him.

From St. Neots to St. Ives past many backwaters, by the willows at Wray House Island, or the pools at Offord and Brampton he too may have wandered. Or he may have gone on slowly by Hinchbrook Hall and Godmanchester and so to the Hemingfords.

The Huntingdon Ouse

Along this river he would have seen old stone and wooden weirs that carried little winding streams to refresh the level meadows.

Little streams that joined the river once again through a forest of flags and flowering water weeds. Butterflies of every colour—red admiral, peacock, saffron, even the clouded yellow—all abound along these banks according to the season, whilst under the overhanging willows bask great chub who slowly fade from sight at the least movement that you make.

.

Nowhere perhaps in all England could there be found a place more in keeping with his thoughts when he wrote:

“The memories which peaceful country scenes call up are not of this world, nor of its thoughts and hopes. Their gentle influence may teach us how to weave fresh garlands for the graves of those we loved: may purify our thoughts, and bear down before it old enmity and hatred; but beneath all this there lingers in the least reflective mind a vague and half-formed consciousness of having held such feelings long before, in some remote and distant time, which calls up solemn thoughts of distant times to come, and bends down pride and worldliness beneath it.”

.

I think there are many of us who have at some time in our lives had that strange feeling that “this has happened before,” or when we see some new scene

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such as a river valley or an old farmhouse that sometime, somewhere, we saw it long ago.

Perhaps there are not so many of us who have done this, but I know very well that I at least have had that strange experience more than once. Is it hereditary, I wonder, or is it some sudden awakening of that sleeping inner consciousness which appears but for one instant and then has gone?

In dreams too one can dream as I have dreamed of some lovely river, a river where every tree and every pool and running rapid is known to me. A river by whose banks I am delighted to find myself again and look about eagerly for what I know will soon be seen.

Yet in reality I have never seen that river. Many rivers, great and small, are known to me but not this one. It is but a dream, yet each time the dream comes round I see it all again, so clearly.

Now, as I said, I have made no attempt to find out whether the Reverend Charles Dickens rector of Hemingford Abbots who was born in 1720 was an ancestor of the great Charles Dickens. In that, I am like the pedlar, but if it should happen to be so, who knows but that it might have been of the Huntingdon Ouse the author of *Oliver Twist* was thinking when he wrote the lines I have quoted above?

A scene along that quiet river Ouse, a scene of peace and quietness such as the old rector must have seen again and yet again.

CHAPTER III

WINDMILLS—LITTLE HILLS—AND LITTLE RIVERS

UPON a hill that overlooks marshes in the South of England you can see a windmill working. Working as a windmill has always worked upon that hill these many hundred years. And should you see it from the west and a little to the north in afternoon or early evening you will see it better still, because then the sun shines on the west side of the mill and shows it up so bravely and so boldly against the sky beyond.

It is not a very large mill, such as one used to find in Norfolk, that home of mighty windmills, where are mills that have such great wings that they describe a circuit which has a diameter of a hundred feet and drive six pairs of millstones. Noble windmills that came into perfection just before the arrival of steam, which conquered all.

Still, although this particular windmill is not very large, it is a very old one.

It may be, again I do not know, as old as any in England. We do not know exactly when windmills were first built in England. You will find no record of them in Domesday, wherein is mentioned many and many a water-mill. Perhaps this old windmill dates back to King John's reign, when they were

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first introduced into England, as some say, by the Crusaders, who copied them from the Saracens and brought back these new wonders from Eastern lands.

All round this hill I write of are many other hills, and between each little hill runs a tiny brook, and each of these tiny brooks joins up with other brooks and runs on and on, falling a little, widening a very little and turning a great deal, growing larger and larger until they reach more level fields, where by now the brook has grown into a larger stream with a name of its very own maybe, or if not with a name of its own, at least it has a local name.

Even tiny streams in some parts of the country have names of their own, although many of these are now forgotten. There is one I can think of at once, near Barcombe Mills in Sussex.

About half a mile or so from Barcombe Mills a little tributary runs into the river Ouse. If you ask any man in the place, anyone who was bred and born round there, what the name of that little river is, he will say, "The Grantham stream."

The old water-bailiff, who died a few years ago at a great age, told me that he had never heard it called by any other name. I found too that it was so called because it ran through the estate of the Grantham family of Barcombe Place and that the land belonged to them on both sides of the river.

"The Grantham stream," said the landlord at the inn, "that's what it's called and always has been." Yet when some time later I wrote to Mr. Ivor Grantham asking if I might fish therein, he wrote back and asked me what river I meant, and when I had sent him a

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section of the Ordnance map showing this little river, he wrote and said that it was called the Bevern. "This name," he said, "is preserved in the names of Bevern cottages and Bevern bridge near Cooksbridge."

So you see there is an old name, certainly not Saxon nor Roman and almost as certainly Celtic, which has been completely forgotten by the country people round there to-day. I suppose that some day some one may wonder for a moment why those cottages are called Bevern cottages or that bridge Bevern bridge; they may wonder but they will never guess.

And no doubt the same kind of thing is going on all over England—names being gradually forgotten. Of course this is only a tiny little stream, only five miles or so long, and one wonders why such a tiny little stream, which is but one of many tributaries of the Ouse, should have a name at all—a name of its very own when many others have none or are forgotten. And when I heard from Mr. Grantham again, when he gave me permission to seek for fish in this Bevern, I began to wonder about it as I sat there amongst the oaks and alders.

And then I remembered a river in Wales that is a branch of the river Teifi which is called the Berwyn; it is six miles long and runs through Cardiganshire.

Now when I thought of this river Berwyn I remembered that a man who studied such things had once told me that W and V in names of places were almost the same and that Celtic place names, although found spelt differently, were often the same word differentiated, so that quite possibly, I thought, Berwyn and Bevern might be the same.

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After all, Berwyn and Bevern are very alike, and as I knew no Celtic I wrote to the Cardiganshire County Library and asked what Berwyn might mean. And they kindly replied and said that literally the word comes from Berw = boiling and wyn = white. So I suppose that the Welsh Berwyn came rushing down from the mountains all boiling and bubbling with white foam, and if the little Bevern that joins the Ouse near Barcombe was ever boiling white it must have been a long time ago when the foothills of the South Downs were a little steeper than they are to-day. Yet it matters little, for if you ask any man at Barcombe the name of that brook he will say, "The Grantham stream"—and there's an end of it.

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But as usual I have wandered away from where I started, which was about windmills or rather about one particular windmill which I can see so plainly when the air is good for seeing, and I have forgotten to say what I meant to say when I told you all about those little hills with rounded tops and little brooks that ran mostly through wooded hills and which all hold a little or a lot of iron in their waters according to the soil from whence their springs are drawn. And what I meant to say was that on an old map that I was shown not long ago there was a little tiny windmill drawn on every hill. Or if not on every hill, on almost every hill. Every parish certainly had its mill, sometimes two or three; and so whenever I look across to the south and see the old mill working, I try to picture to myself what a busy sight it must have been

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to see those other mills all working too. They have gone, of course. The millers rest in the churchyards, the mills have been pulled down, the old millstones carried away, and flour comes into England from over the seas packed in paper bags, they tell me, all ready for the cooking.

And although I have heard it whispered that my old mill only grinds for the farmer and not for the baker, I never look at those sails going round and round without recalling the miller on his steps, the miller's men all dusty white and the miller's waggons. Hooded they were most of them, certainly the best of them, of a pale yellowish colour and drawn by sturdy quiet horses, well kept, trim, and more often than not with little bells over their heads that jingled as they strode out upon their way: so proud to hear them ringing. And the bells the miller's horses wore were no mere ornament: it was not only for the pleasure of their music that the miller's carter keep those bells. It was for another reason. Millers' waggons had to climb up many little lanes. They were long and narrow and the way was steep and hard. There was no room for two to pass, and even to stop and start again—for sacks of flour are heavy—was a strain upon the horses such as no good carter would allow if he could help it. So as the team went up the hill, straining with bent necks and heaving sides, the little bells would sing a song of warning that was carried up the old old lanes.

Many of these old lanes were cut out of rock, with rocky sides and overhanging trees that kept the music of the bells from spreading away across the

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fields and sent it up the lane before them as a warning to any carter who might be on the point of coming down the narrow piece to wait awhile where the lane was wider at the top and where there was more room for passing.

CHAPTER IV

TROWBRIDGE—SALISBURY AND HOME

THERE is no way of writing a book that can bring back to you the real joy of wandering on from place to place. The pen has not the power to bring that something which is mysterious and unexpected and which you will certainly come across next day in your real journeys.

But even if it cannot do that, there is, in this other way of wandering, the power to be able to jump with giant strides from place to place, yes and even from county to county.

Yesterday we were in a southern county with woods and windmills and little streams: to-morrow in this way we travel we can be in Norfolk, on the Cotswolds, or, as we are actually going to be, down towards the West Country in Wiltshire.

And I will tell you why I have made this jump of eighty miles or so from my old windmill to that county, and it is because of an apple.

It was but yesterday that a man who brings certain things that are needed for the house happened to call just as I had come in from my little orchard. I showed him some apples that I had been picking and sorting out for storing, and he asked what they were

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and I replied, "Cox's Orange Pippin, the best apples of all."

"Are they ripe?" he asked; "they look it."

"No," I told him, "for a Cox will not have its full flavour for a long time yet; they improve with keeping: some people think they are at their best a little before or at Christmas. Some apples are like cheese, they must be kept awhile."

"Ah," he said, "I know that. Dad's got a cheese now, beauty, two years old—from a man he knows at Trowbridge in Wiltshire: we cut it this morning, and it's so tender you could cut it in half with a piece of cotton."

"We had one before," he continued; "fifty-six pounds it was, and when Dad put it in the shop"—for they keep a little general shop—"he doubted if he'd get rid of it all."

"And did he?" I asked.

"All gone under the fortnight," he answered. "It was too good to last."

"Well," said I, "it's a long time since I had a piece of cheese from Wiltshire and I wish you would bring me a little."

"Have you ever been to Wiltshire?" he asked.

And I told him I had, certainly, but that it was a long time ago, and that if I had not had to stop at home I should have gone right through Wiltshire this summer.

So you see thus quite unexpectedly I jumped right away down into Wilts, and back came all kinds of memories.

Now whenever a man thinks of Wiltshire I am sure

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the first thing he thinks of is Salisbury Plain, and if he has never been there he will imagine a great level plain as flat as a summer sea. Well, let him go and see it, for I cannot describe it.

I believe it was Richard Jefferies—himself a Wiltshire man, for he was born at a farmhouse at Coate, Swindon—who said that no man should call himself a farmer unless he could point to three generations of his ancestors—all farmers—lying in the churchyard; and in the same way I say that no man should write about Salisbury Plain or the Wiltshire Downs unless he too has three generations of ancestors who were born somewhere within sight or walking distance of Salisbury spire or the Pewsey Vale.

But this I do know and this I will say, that if you have never seen the spire you should take the road straight away, go right down through Andover and, without stopping to think of the ancient renown of the place—in Roman days—when it was called Andeafaran (passage of the river Ande), and without going to see the remains of the old Roman road that ran from Winchester to Cirencester, and which once could be seen at a spot called Harewood Copse (which I fear must be a copse no longer!), without stopping for any of these things (or to see if there are still trout under the bridge over the little Anton), go right on.

Take the road past where once was Little Ann and Down Farm and Middle Wallop, past Lobcombe Corner and Winterslow Hut, and then on for five miles or so till you cross the river Bourne and Salisbury spire is but a mile or so away.

You will have seen it before this, long before this,

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but I will not tell you where. I don't want to say "Here you stop and see the spire!" No, I want you to find it for yourself, and this is only meant for the old and infirm, because all others should see that spire from one place only, and that is the open downs.

Still, see it you must and as far away as you can too.

And what can I tell you of Salisbury that everybody does not know? Nothing perhaps, and yet there are many who do not know that this spire, the tallest spire in England, leans twenty-seven and a half inches to the south and is thirty-five feet higher than there are days in the year.

And yet one other thing I might mention, and this is that Addison—Joseph Addison—was born on the first of May 1672 not far from Salisbury, for his father was rector of Milston, and that he went to school at the old Grammar school at Salisbury before he went on to Lichfield as the old pedlar told me. And as I was a little doubtful about it—not knowing that Addison's father was afterwards Dean of Lichfield—I looked up the history of the old school at Salisbury and I read that Dr. Maton, who wrote *Observations on the Western Counties*, well, a very long time before you or I were born, was also a scholar there; besides "many other gentlemen distinguished for superior acquirements, who received the rudiments of their education at the Salisbury Grammar School," and long may it flourish!

And it may too come as a surprise to many who do not know Salisbury to learn that over a hundred years ago Salisbury steel and Salisbury knives were famous all over England and in foreign lands.

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And because Salisbury is the site of the Cathedral and is the spot that was chosen for it when they left Old Sarum long ago, I will add that I have been told that one of the chief reasons for leaving was the noise the wind made and that it drowned the voices of the priests who were holding the services and also that they were short of water there, and I wonder if either of these things is true.

And although I said just now that no man should write of Wiltshire if he is not of the county, I will say just a little for those who have never been there. One day I hope—still hope—to go right through Wiltshire again by easy stages and on to Gloucestershire and Hereford, and so to the borders of Wales in Radnorshire, and then I shall be able to tell you a lot more.

But I must say this now before I forget it: I want you to take a map of England and Wales with all their counties marked in different colours and look at it. Fifty-two of these counties there are—the same number as there are weeks in the year; and when you have looked at them all I want you to find Wiltshire and look at that carefully. If you then look at the southern counties of England from Cornwall to Kent you will see Wiltshire, standing as it were above them all, as the keystone of an arch.

Right on the second degree of longitude you will find Devizes, and if you draw a line from Devizes to the North Foreland and another to Land's End, you will find it is a little more than one hundred and sixty miles as the crows fly, more or less, more to west and

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less to east. Now along that line to the north-east lies the River Thames for its whole long length, a natural frontier, whilst to the north-west running through Gloucestershire are the Cotswold Hills.

And when you have seen that you will have seen the great and ancient importance of Wiltshire and Salisbury Plain, because as the Thames guarded Southern England from the Danes, so the Cotswolds and Gloucester at one time guarded England from the Welsh.

And on Salisbury Plain in the very earliest times were the ancient camps and fortifications and vast earthworks which were meant to be the greatest defence of all. And to prove that what I say is true, I say that Devizes was really called Divisae or Ad Divisas by the Romans because it was the line of division: the boundary and the last great stronghold against these Celts from Wales. So now if ever you go to Devizes and stand on Roundaway Hill, or Roundway Down as some call it, and look at Devizes, old old Devizes, a short two miles away—as I did long ago—look down on Devizes, which is so old in history, for here have been many battles between Romans and Celts in olden days, you will be standing on ancient ground indeed.

All Wiltshire was a battle-ground, and along the whole great length of the Marlborough Downs to the north lies the great Wandsdyke, whilst the old Grimsditch near Downton in the south makes you realise that the old county was the great stronghold of Celt, of Roman, of Saxon and Norman each in his own time.

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Here too on Roundway Down was fought that battle in the summer of 1643.

Once again came battle to Devizes, for in May 1643 the Cornishmen—not out of love for the Stuarts, but for fidelity to their local chieftains—joined in the conflict.

After victory at Stratton Hill they won another victory at Lansdown Hill and all Somerset was in royalist hands, but Sir William Waller hung on to the victorious army as it marched for Oxford and hemmed their infantry in Devizes.

Came July and, reinforced, the tables were turned and Waller's army was cut to pieces on Roundway Down. The last battle fought in Wiltshire.

And now all is peaceful and Devizes still is noted for three very excellent things which the men of the Avon Valley are very fond of. Three I said, but it is not everyone that likes the last, and that is snuff. The others are ale and cheesecakes. Cheesecakes, ale and snuff, the Avon Valley and Devizes, and all's well with the world, and very good ale and very good cheesecakes as I can bear testimony, but for snuff perhaps you must be born in the Avon Valley to really like it, though Wiltshire men say it is very good.

So leaving the Pewsey Vale and starting right down by the most south-easterly corner of Wiltshire, I just want to point out one old road. A very ancient road that runs from Christchurch in Hampshire up through Ringwood and Fordingbridge to Downton and thence to Salisbury. I want you to follow that old road—on your map if you cannot see it any other way—all the way up and on to Amesbury, Pewsey,

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Marlborough, Cricklade, Cirencester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Droitwich, and to Old Droitwich, and to the salt there—the Salinae of the Romans. For Droitwich has had several names—Salinae, Wych and then Droitwich—and men said this word Droit meant a legal “right” to take the salt from the salt springs.

It may be so, I do not know, but I do know that until the reign of George the Third, men who worked in salt mines were slaves. They were the last slaves or serfs in England, and could follow no other occupation even if they wished to do so, and their children had to follow it also.

This is true, and a special statute was passed in that reign to make them free.

And I fear by now that you will have forgotten that I told you that this old road through Wiltshire started at Christchurch in Hampshire, this road that goes all the way to Old Droitwich, so I just mention it again because I believe it is one of the oldest roads in all England. It was a road long long before the Romans came, and they called it the Salt Way because of the great quantities of salt the men brought down to the sea along that road to go all over the Roman Empire.

And as this road runs right through the whole length of Wiltshire it shows us what a busy place Wiltshire must have been and what a lot of travellers passed and repassed along that old Salt Way.

Of course it may be wrong, but an old professor I know, a learned man if a little annoying at times, has told me that Salisbury, the great county town of

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Wiltshire, is called Salisbury from that word salt also: from *sal* meaning salt, Salis-burgh—or the Borough of Salt.

So you see there is no end to all that you may find in Wiltshire when you go there, for besides all these old things there is much to love—glorious downs, water meadows, lovely streams and quiet old farms; and towards evening when the country comes into her very own, stand and watch the stars come out as the shepherds do on all the downs of England.

And for beauty of wood and valley what is more beautiful than the broken hilly country along the western border? It makes me long for the sight of it, the scent and sight of that country which I saw so long ago and yet have not forgotten and hope to see again.

And in writing all this I have but just remembered that I have not said that the cheese was a splendid cheese, a credit to the maker of cheese who lives near Trowbridge and a credit to Wiltshire.

Now although I am not a Wiltshireman and have no right to be writing about it at all, I want to say something about a farm I once was on whose splendid meadows and grazing grounds ran down beside the Avon.

From Chippenham I had come a long long journey in a trap with high wheels, so that one could see across the hedges all those miles of green pastures, passing carts that carried milk over many miles in enormous cans to the Great Western Railway. And I remember

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the fishing I had and of a great pool beside a weir, and a little of all my farmer friend told me of those water-meadows and how the rivers helped them. For he showed me many little streams that ran about and across these meadows, and of certain little wooden dams or sluices that he called "hatches," which drove or guided the water to drinking ponds or to water the meadows which were away from the river. And sometimes on the larger streams were real dams of beaten clay that made pools and raised the level of the water. He raised one or two of these hatches to show me how they worked, and the water was clear and sweet, being water from the chalk hills.

It may be I am wrong, but I think I remember that he spoke of the men who looked after these hatches as "Hatchers." I hope I am not wrong, because once I met a man named Hatcher who came from Wiltshire, and I like to think that he was descended from some very early hatcher who watered those meadows before men had surnames as they do now unconnected with their calling.

For besides Hatchers, there were Wellers and Wallers and Bridgers and Thatchers and many many more.

I believe he told me too that this work of looking after the water-meadows ran in families from father to son, just as I have known land-drainers in Essex who worked such wonders with that long and narrow kind of spade, smaller at the bottom edge and which they called a draining-iron or draining tool. And well-sinkers, they too handed on their work from father to son, and I do not know how much beer a hatcher can

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or did drink when beer was good and plentiful, but I do know what the Essex land-drainers could put away; and as to well-sinkers, why, I suppose it came naturally to them, for they would have won easily and yet never seemed to be the worse for it.

And although I had seen many men mowing before and not a few since, and although, as I say, it was so long ago, I shall always remember those Wiltshire meadows and can still fancy I hear the swish of the scythe as I heard it that morning, a long, a broad and a shiny scythe, that cut through the grass—with the dew still upon it—with that wonderful regular timing. And of all the sounds of farm and country there is none like that sound of a good mower with his scythe, like which, to me at least, there is no other sound in all the world.

So after this long journey through Wiltshire I hope you are not weary, for there are many more to go. And even before we start on the next journey I must say just a few words more. Wiltshire has more than once held the enemy at bay, the barbarians who came to destroy such civilisation as there was. It may have to do so again. Not perhaps the barbarians of sword and javelin, but the barbarians who would destroy our countryside. Wiltshire is country yet. Sometimes I think as I remember those great rolling downs and open miles that it stands for all that is best to love in this our England. Peace—quiet—home. And on this word—home—I end, because it is the greatest word almost in our language; and a man who was born and bred in the very heart of Somerset, in Somerset where the word “home” is so loved that Somerset men

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all over the world look upon "Somerset" and "home" as the same thing, once told me that only in Wiltshire did you get the same true meaning of the word as you do in Somerset.

"If you want to hear that word 'home,' " he said, "spoken as we speak it, quietly, lovingly, spoken from the heart, spoken with the long faith of generations of men who were born on and of the land—you must go to Wiltshire. You can't write it," he added, "you must hear it—that is Home."

CHAPTER V

CANTERBURY BELLS—OLD JOHN GERARD— AND MEN OF KENT

FROM Wiltshire to where I live is a long journey: not so long maybe as men travel to-day, but a long long journey when the horse was the fastest thing upon the road. And since once I was in Wiltshire and accepting with much pleasure the hospitality of Wiltshire men, I like to remember it as it then was, before the motor-cars had turned one road into the image of another. For in those days—those happier days—you travelled on roads of character. Here, as you left Kent, you were on the chalk perhaps and then Kentish rag, and just over the border in Sussex, after you had left the Kentish rag behind, you travelled upon iron stone, right across Ashdown with sandy stretches for mile on mile right across the Weald, and then on to chalk again and so on.

But now it is all one colour: no longer will we see those white roads of Wiltshire or the red ones of Devon and parts of Somerset.

So as it was a long journey then I still like to think of it as such, and now that we are back again we will rest awhile in our gardens and think of it all.

And to begin with, a certain man whom I have

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already mentioned—a Wiltshireman—once wrote, “it is injurious to the mind as well as to the body to be always in one place and always surrounded by the same circumstances.”

That man was Richard Jefferies.

But I should like to say that although many of us have of necessity to be always in one place, we can take our minds away from it . . . if not our bodies.

I know that it is very hard, but now and again one succeeds and for a short spell you almost feel that you have been away.

Richard Jefferies had to spend many years in one place—for he was too ill to move—so you can be very sure that he knew of what he was writing. So many people do not. But of all the men who have loved and written of English fields and woods there has been none like Richard Jefferies. That is worth remembering, and as with that we leave Wiltshire behind and have to potter about our garden again for a while, it reminds me that there are too many books written to-day on gardens.

Not far from where I once lived was a man who had written a book on gardens, but he had not had a garden for more than a few years, and an ancient gardener I knew, one of those dear old wrinkled men who still talk of “fencen” and “posten” for fences and posts, went to look at this garden.

I saw him when he came back. “Well,” I asked, “what do you think of it? What did you think of his apples?” for he had many of the very latest kinds of apple trees—and the old old gardener shook his head

Canterbury Bells—Old John Gerard

and said, "Where's his ribstons? Where's the tools he's wore out? Where's his rheumatics?"

Well, that is what the old gardener said, and of another writer who has become an authority on gardens, I asked once why Canterbury Bells were called Canterbury Bells, but he could not tell me.

So whenever anyone comes to see me and talks of gardens, I ask this question, but receive no answer that is worth the writing; and as this kept on coming back into my mind I wrote to a certain man I know in London and asked him if he could find out for me—but he could not either. So I wrote from one to another, and at last someone told me that Canterbury Bells were not Canterbury Bells at all, but an imported variety from a distant land.

The real old Canterbury Bells, he wrote, "are really the nettle-leaved bellflower which once grew in profusion around Canterbury and were once called 'Throatwort'." To prove this he told me that John Gerard the herbalist wrote: "Throatwort is called in English Canterbury Bells . . . Throatwort because of the virtue it hath against the pain and swelling thereof."

I think you must have seen it along unspoilt lanes with leaves like nettles and bells a lovely blue.

If you have not and one August you come across it, you can remember old John Gerard the herbalist, who was born at Nantwich in Cheshire in 1545—long before the garden Canterbury Bells were seen in our gardens.

Old Gerard kept Lord Burghley's gardens in London and was besides a surgeon of repute, being master of the Barber-Surgeons in 1608.

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So here we are back in our garden with Canterbury Bells and have forgotten all about the wild ones that once were Canterbury Bells indeed. Not that they only grew in Kent; they grow all over southern England if the hedgers will but spare them. You see they do not flower until late July or August, and in that quiet time which still exists "twixt haysel and harvest," the grass beside the hedgerows is very often cut and down come many stems that soon would have been flowering.

And as I have just mentioned Kent and Canterbury, it reminds me that a certain lady once wrote to me, very nicely it is true, and said that I was wrong when I said that Men of Kent were those who dwelt south and west of the Medway; and I remember that I wrote back and said that the discussion had been going on so long—for nearly a thousand years or so—that the dispute would never be settled.

I do not suppose it ever will be; the late Professor W. W. Skeat said he hoped it never would be: it was so interesting. Yet although it will never be settled I have just found out something that may be a good argument for the theory that "Men of Kent" are born west and south of the Medway. And I can say it quite impartially, being neither a man of Kent nor a Kentish man, and will tell you for what it may be worth: not taking any side, for I have had friends from both.

And this is what I read: "Canterbury was the Saxon Cantwarabyrig, which meant Borough of the Men of Kent."

Now all Kentish men can sit down and think about

Men of Kent

that, for, argue as they will, write and protest to me—as I hope they will—you cannot put Canterbury north of the Medway nor Kentish men south of it!

And yet one more thing I will write of Canterbury, that of all the fame and glories of Canterbury is now quite forgotten, at least if not quite forgotten I am sure you have never heard of it in connection with Canterbury, and that is—brawn. Once upon a time Canterbury brawn was famous all over England and was even sent to Dover and sold in France.

It is indeed a curious and strange thing that I who have just been writing of Canterbury, and a few pages ago was writing a little of Wiltshire, should end this chapter on brawn, because Wiltshire brawn has been famous for hundreds of years too, and all this started from Canterbury Bells, the wild ones, the nettle-leaved bellflower, the throatwort that old John Gerard wrote about nearly four hundred years ago.

CHAPTER VI

THE RIVER MEDWAY—MR. COX AND RIBSTONE PIPPINS

ONCE, but a few years ago, I was walking by the River Medway, and as I wandered down the river, past several little branch streams and on as far as Hartlake and under the bridge there, I came to where a little channel or stream runs out of the main river and joins it again lower down. And I remember that it was a glorious day in late September, and through the trees I could see old Kent farmhouses and those pointed Oast-houses which one can see through all that part of Kent where the hops grow, as they grow nowhere else in the world. Hopping time was over, but there were apples left for picking and many were the pickers that I had met upon my way. Women too for the most part, as these pick, they say, more carefully, and even the tall old trees that would make me giddy to think about: these too they strip from bough to bough on ladders tall and slender but with a large and steady base. Ladders that they tell me are only used in Kent and parts of Buckingham for the cherries there. Indeed a man who knows most of all there is to know of fruit and fruit growing once told me that only women can pick cherries as they should be picked,

The River Medway

and that Kent women are the best cherry-pickers of all, and that though there are many parts of England where you could grow good cherries, even Bigarreau Napoleon, Black Heart and May Duke, you would have to get women from Kent to pick them all or leave them for the blackbirds and all the birds who love cherries.

Well, as I said, it was a glorious day and there were so many things to see, but I wished that there were more fish, which would be possible if the Medway did but hold much cleaner water.

For the Medway is not a clear and crystal stream; muddy you expect it to be, slow you wish it to be, for a rapid running stream like the streams of Exmoor would be out of place indeed amid those fields of Kent, yet I wish that it were purer. Many smaller streams meet to make this old river, and most of them are polluted.

One tiny stream I know is choked with all the refuse of a village street, another runs by a gas-works, and another is but the dumping ground of rubbish—and yet I read that they are to spend nearly half a million pounds to improve the river at its wider end, for commercial purposes I suppose.

I would that the Conservators or the Board or whatever they call those worthy gentlemen who hold their meeting in a Medway barge, so picturesque to see, would but come up to the very source—afoot this needs to be—and see what runs down into that river—yes, from the very source, and remedy it all.

Then and then only would the trout and maybe salmon come back once more and cows have clean water

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to drink and people clear water to bathe in and boat upon.

Indeed I read in a Kent paper not so very long ago that bathing was dangerous in the Medway on account of the pollution, and even boating was not very safe!

So let all men of Kent and Kentish men cease to quarrel about the Medway and unite to cleanse that river and make it a river worthy of that part of England which they are so pleased to call the Garden of Kent and where such good apples grow.

But it is of apples I would be writing and not of rivers, and of one apple or kind of apple in particular which I have mentioned already and which is, as I said, the best apple of all—the apple known as Cox's Orange Pippin.

And in case you do not know from whence this apple came I will tell you what I know.

For although Kent is noted for apples and Hereford is perhaps the finest apple-country in the world and Worcester and all the south-west are noted for apples—large and small—it did not come from any of them.

When I was young I heard an old rhyme or couplet, and I remember a line or so of that old rhyme; it ran something like this:

... "Cornish men for wrestling, Middlesex men for tricks above ground, but Hereford men for dancing." ...

I know this is not the correct version, but it is all I can remember; and I am quite sure of two things that it said, "Middlesex men for tricks above ground and Hereford men for dancing."

Mr. Cox and Ribstone Pippins

I do not know exactly what tricks above ground meant, but I have always thought it might mean running—jumping—hop-skip and jump, and so on.

But of all the tricks above ground that any Middlesex men ever made, the prize should be given to one COX who raised the Cox's Orange Pippin.

For Mr. Cox was a Middlesex man and a worthy butcher as well. Moreover, Mr. Cox had settled at Colnbrook, Middlesex, that is to say he lived the Middlesex side of the Coln Brook and not the Buckingham side.

Mr. Cox took a great fancy to a certain apple which he so admired that he thought he would set some of the seeds.

That apple was a Ribstone Pippin, or as now spelt Ribston. Mr. Cox set these seeds and five seedlings grew; of these five, three were discarded or died, so but two were left. Of the two that were left, one produced such beautiful fruit for eating that it has become world-famous, and that is the apple called Cox's Orange Pippin.

The other was a very good apple also; but it is a better apple for cooking and was much cultivated in Herefordshire at one time and was called Cox's Pomona.

So there you have the story of the origin of Cox's wonderful apple, raised by a retired butcher in the happy smiling fields of Middlesex when Middlesex was printed in the geography books as a "corn-county, with many fertile meadows and very many flourishing apple and plum orchards."

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And since we are talking of apples and have said that Cox's Orange Pippin was a seedling of a Ribston, I will tell you what a farmer in Yorkshire told me when once I was right away in Wharfedale and had been to a place called Appletreewick and into the inn there, where I had stayed and enjoyed every minute of my stay.

Well, this farmer, when I had asked him if he knew the meaning of the name of Appletreewick, had said that parts of Yorkshire were famous for apples, and he said and maintained that the Ribston, which by many older folk was still looked upon as the best apple of all, had been first grown or raised at Ribstone Hall, so I suppose it should be spelt with an *e*.

In the gardens of this old hall on the banks of the River Nidd it was first cultivated, not far from Walshford Bridge near Knaresborough.

That is where the famous Ribston Pippin was first cultivated, and I remember also that he told me that in the family chapel there was a strange monument supposed to be the Standard-bearer of the IXth Roman Legion, which had been dug up in York in 1688.

Now when he told me this it set me wondering, wondering why there is no monument to Mr. Cox of Cox's Orange.

Surely if ever a man deserved a place of honour, a statue to his memory, it should be Mr. Cox of Colnbrook, Middlesex.

Monuments to Soldiers, Sailors, Statesmen, Poets and all kinds of people fill Westminster Abbey. But none for Mr. Cox. Still, his name will never be

Mr. Cox and Ribstone Pippins

forgotten, for as long as the English language is spoken, so long will the name of Cox be honoured.

"I have a fine old Cox's Orange in my garden," I have heard a man say more than once, and he speaks with pride: well, there is one monument to Mr. Cox. For, like Sir Christopher Wren who bade those who sought his monument to look around—St. Paul's—I would suggest that the finest monument a man could have is an orchard or plantation, yes, or even one tree, of Cox's Orange Pippin all loaded with those lovely apples—just ready for the picking.

Times change and you do not hear so much of Ribstons as you did.

Years ago a Ribston was the greatest favourite of all. I know very well it was when I was a boy and was staying in Herefordshire and fishing in the River Wye.

For many farmers had Ribstons in their gardens as well as orchards of cider apples such as Kingston Black, Foxwhelp, and Cherry Pearmain, with Moorcroft pears for perry. And I remember one old farmer who lived not far from Ross who would sing a song or two when he had had some very good cider—Foxwhelp and Kingston Black, two years in brandy cask—and one of those old songs went something like this:

Old uncle is nimble, he's hearty and spry,
As Ribstons his cheeks, clear as crystal his eye;
His hair is as white as the flowering may,
He drinks nothing but cider by night and by day.

And I remember that the old farmer I am writing about was well over seventy and he said you could live as long as you like in that country of Hereford.

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From his window you could see the Wye down below, winding away between fields, wooded hills, and very high hills, and in the distance the Black Mountain, and another very high one he called the Sugar-Loaf away over in Monmouthshire.

I do not know if he is alive now, but if he is, I for one should not be surprised to hear it, and should like to see him and have some of his cider, but not his perry, for that was too strong for any man save a Hereford farmer!

CHAPTER VII

ST. IVES—KING RICHARD THE SECOND—AND A MIGHTY OAK

IT is a curious fact, and one not unworthy of some little consideration, that if you are unable to leave your home and travel, scarcely a day passes without some trifling incident arising that recalls some place with which you were familiar years ago or in which you may be interested.

I have I know said something very similar to this in a previous chapter, but what I am about to add I have not already written, and it is this, which is of more particular interest to all who are placed as I have said.

Some such little incident having thus occurred, it is not unusual for another to arise almost immediately, the next day perhaps, which again brings forward that long-forgotten place into the forefront of your mind.

I will go further, and maintain that to my certain knowledge this has even been prolonged and a third incident has arisen which recalls that place once more.

I do not wish (for indeed I know nothing whatever about it) to wander into the realms of those learned philosophers both ancient and modern or to dip if even for a moment into their writings—which I am quite certain could never be understood by me—and in which

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I am told are many volumes on "association of ideas." No, I do not mean that at all, far from it—all I mean I have just said in as plain English as I am capable of writing.

Let me explain a little, for this is of some interest to me and may possibly be of some interest to one who has been placed as I have.

There is not far from my gate a letter box, built into the wall, where most of my letters are posted, and the box is exactly two hundred and eighty of my paces from my gate. This I know only too well, because for over three years that was the longest journey I had made on foot. Now I write this in no sense of self-pity or to ask for sympathy, but as a plain statement of fact, and during all that time, in the course of which I have made many journeys to and from the letter box, I had never met any man, woman or child actually posting or on the point of posting any letter into that box on my arrival.

Possibly this is of no importance and of no interest, but it so happened that one morning as I was about to put my letters in the box, one of which was to a certain resident of St. Ives, Cornwall, a middle-aged man who had been standing beside the box put out his hand and hesitated.

"It is," said I as I posted my letters, "a good thing that this box is larger than the old one or you could not have posted that packet."

He smiled, a pleasant-looking man of the retired tradesman type, and said, "They're larger where I come from."

"So you don't live here?" I asked.

St. Ives

"No," he replied, "I come from near Southsea."

"A Hampshire man?" I asked, for he did not speak like it.

"No," he answered quickly. "I was born at St. Ives."

"Cornishman," said I; "well, that's a long way"—though he did not speak like a Cornishman either.

"Huntingdon," he corrected me, "St. Ives, Huntingdon, but I was in business at Southsea for twenty-five years."

Now you will be wondering why this should be of any interest; it is not in itself, I admit, but some weeks before I had come across the name St. Ives, Huntingdon, in a list of old inns where one could hire post-horses, and I remembered that I had wondered why a Cornish name should be found in Huntingdon, which county is as little like Cornwall as any in all England; and I remembered that I had read on and came to St. Neots—also in Huntingdon, and also a well-known name in Cornwall where there was a famous well to St. Neot, and I had looked them up in a book. The St. Ives in Cornwall is, I believe, so called because St. Ia, an Irish Princess, was martyred there in 450 A.D., and St. Ives in Huntingdon obtained its name from one Ivo, a Persian bishop who died there in 590, and so has nothing to do with Cornwall; but St. Neots in Huntingdon is connected with Cornwall because the remains of King Alfred's eldest brother were removed from St. Neots in Cornwall to this place.

We walked along those two hundred and eighty paces together and talked of St. Neots in Huntingdon

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and in Cornwall, and I asked him if he had been to Cornwall, but he said no, and asked about St. Ives and St. Neots in that county, and having told him a little of those places—having been to both many times in years gone by—and the day being warm, I asked if he would come in for a minute and sit in my garden if he were in no hurry, and I asked him if there were many cats in his St. Ives. At which he looked at me wondering a little (as people sometimes do), and I asked him then if he had not heard of the cats of St. Ives in Cornwall, where there are so many cats, cats of every size and colour, or were when I was last in St. Ives, all on account of the fish, and some say on account of the mice, which in St. Ives are very partial to fishing-nets that smell of pilchards, or of herrings when there are any, for they left St. Ives Bay for a long time, but I believe are coming back once more. And I told him of the old rhyme, which ran something like this:

When I was going to St. Ives
I met a man with seven wives;
Every wife had a sack,
Every sack had a cat.
How many were going to St. Ives?

Then having talked a little of Huntingdon he went upon his way and I have not seen him again, since, as I say, he was but staying in the district.

All this may seem to be much ado about nothing, but I have another coincidence to tell you, for on the very next morning I saw a youngish-looking man standing by the milk cart which had just called at

St. Ives

my door. I recognised him then as a man who had called to canvass for new subscribers or readers to a certain daily paper, and at which he had not been successful so far as I was concerned; and after the milkman had passed on I spoke to this man again and asked him how he had fared at this business of canvassing from door to door.

A dark man he was, with dark eyes and altogether something slightly foreign or Eastern about him, and after we had talked awhile he told me he had been in the navy and that his home was in Cornwall; and when I asked him whereabouts in Cornwall, he answered as I almost knew he would . . . St. Ives.

Now I know this is but coincidence that may happen and does indeed happen any day, but within so short a space of time to come across two strangers to the district, one from St. Ives in Huntingdon whom I met as I was posting a letter to St. Ives in Cornwall, and within a few hours to meet a Cornishman outside my gate who was born at St. Ives, is perhaps just a little out of the ordinary, or at all events enough to bear out what I have said when I began this chapter.

And to explain to you what was really the cause of my writing all I have just written, I will say that when I sat down it was to write about our next journey—a long journey, all the way to Yorkshire and Westmorland. Indeed it was with that purpose in view, and that alone, that I started to write this morning; and when I say started, I mean I had got out my papers and my pen, because I did not actually start for the reason that my old neighbour brought me some tomatoes and I went as far as my gate with him.

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At my gate was a little old man, very old and very small—as I wrote once before, old men I always met whenever I went fishing, and if I stay at home they come to my door. This little old man did not come to my door, he was sitting in the lane with his back to my neighbour's hedge, and I said "Good morning."

At first I thought he was a tramp, but soon learnt that he was just wandering the roads from place to place in search of work.

When I say in search of work, any hope or prospect of work had long since gone from his mind, but having wandered so long he just kept on wandering from town to town, from Union to Union, with a half-empty sack on his back and very ragged clothes.

No sooner had he spoken than by his constant repetition of "Yes, yes," and "No, no," and by the tone of his voice, I knew him to be a Welshman, and he was, he told me, a native of Flint.

Now Flint is unlike most counties of England or Wales because it has a little piece that is detached, called the Hundred of Maelor—surrounded by Shropshire, Cheshire and Denbighshire.

Well, this little man told me he had been a miner in Flintshire, but the mines he worked in had been closed down and he had been wandering the roads since 1919. First of all, he told me, he walked to London, one hundred and ninety-two miles. "It is," he said, "a long way to London from Flint."

And when he told me that I remembered another man who had made that journey, as a prisoner, a man with a sad and troubled heart, an unhappy man, and

King Richard the Second

one might add an unfortunate man . . . King Richard the Second.

"Richard of Bordeaux" as the people called him, leaving out the "King" towards the end of his reign.

Do you remember the story of that journey? It is told by Froissart, John Froissart, one of the saddest in English history.

King Richard was in Flint Castle with a small band of followers when the Earl of Derby, or Henry of Lancaster as he was called, rode up to the Castle and demanded to see the King.

"Have you broken your fast?" asked Lancaster.

"No," replied the King; "why do you ask?"

"Because," continued the Earl, "you have a long way to ride."

"What road?" said the King.

"You must come to London," answered the Earl, "and I advise you to eat and drink heartily, that you may perform the journey gaily."

We are told by Sir John that the King made a most uneasy breakfast—after which he went to London to the Tower and to his death.

That, I think, is one of the saddest journeys in our history. That long road by Chester, Tarporley, Nantwich, Stafford, Lichfield, Hinckley, Lutterworth, Northampton, Woburn, Dunstable, St. Albans, Barnet and so to London—that was the way he went.

Thus unexpectedly I met a man from Flint, a wandering man of the roads, small, poor, and just a shadow of a man wandering aimlessly from place to place, without any vestige of hope or ambition, alone,

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friendless. . . . One who had also come along that long road from Flint to London as over five hundred years ago a King—just as hopeless and as friendless—had come before him.

And as I came back to my door I tried to put all this unhappiness out of my thoughts and to think of other journeys.

I thought of King Harold's wonderful march from Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire to London, that September of 1066, and I thought of journeys in stories, of John Ridd's famous walk to Dunster and on to his home, which he did in such wonderful time, and of my favourite walk of all the walks recorded in English literature. Not my favourite because of the scenery, but because of that unseen but wonderfully clear vision of it all. Do you know which one I mean? But of course you do not; it is that perfect opening to Walton's *The Compleat Angler*. Did any other book ever start like this one? I know of none:

“You are well overtaken, gentlemen! a good-morning to you both! I have stretched my legs up Tottenham Hill to overtake you, hoping your business may occasion you towards Ware, whither I am going this fine fresh May morning.”

Can't you see it all? I can; the sun, the green leaves, green as only leaves can be in May, and old Walton's heart full of the joy of . . . going a-fishing . . . which to many of us, old and young, has no equal in the whole wide world.

And talking of Walton, did ever book end as his did—Part I, I mean? You have forgotten it?

A Mighty Oak

Well, if you have I will not write it here because it will give you so much more pleasure to find it for yourself.

And should there be but one amongst you who has never read his wonderful book, I hope you will read it. No need for you to be a fisherman to enjoy that book printed in 1653. Have you ever read the "Advertisement of Walton's Angler"?—

"There is published a booke of eighteenpence price ? called the *Compleat Angler* ? or ? *The Contemplative Man's Recreation*: being a discourse of fish and fishing. Not unworthy the perusal. Sold by Richard Marriott, in St. Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet-Street."

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And now just as I was about to begin that long journey to Yorkshire which I sat down to write about, as I have said, my eyes fell upon the following which I have copied out from a London newspaper:

"A Bosnian peasant has sold a single oak tree for about £80. The age of the tree is estimated at 1,500 years, and it has been purchased by the University of Budapest for scientific purposes."

Which reminded me of the oak trees I mentioned some time ago but about which I have not written yet.

And as fishing and fish-hooks, and angle-rods and all such things of which Walton wrote, continue to come into my thoughts, I am reminded of an old saying of Ovid, which bears out what I have been trying

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to explain, that is to say, that although you can't get away there is always something ready to turn up to take your thoughts away when you least expect it, if you are prepared to have them taken away. And to be prepared you must—to use a fisherman's or angler's expression—always have your hook in the water, for you never know: as all good anglers will tell you. And trout anglers, or at least we unworthy wet-fly fishermen, have been taught that “he who keeps his flies longest on the water takes most fish.”

And this is what Ovid wrote: “Let your hook always be cast: in the stream where you least expect it there will be a fish.”

CHAPTER VIII

LONDON TO CARLISLE—THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO— AND TWENTY-TWO GUINEAS A YEAR

IT was Thackeray who wrote: "We arrive at places now, but we travel no more." You remember, perhaps, the famous coaching inn, his description taken from the days of Steele—the coach that took five days between London and Bath—Captain Macheath, the curate taking his pipe in the kitchen, the pack-horses in the great stable, the drivers and ostlers and all. . . . "It must have been no small pleasure," he writes, "even to sit in the great kitchen in those days and see the tide of human kind pass by."

And to-day we too, you and I, arrive at places but we travel no more . . . only a hundred years ago, what a difference there was. And a little earlier still, say at the time of Waterloo, but a hundred and twenty years or so ago, how far away it seems to-day.

And Waterloo? Why should I mention that battle now? I will tell you, for we have a long journey to go, a very long journey, all the way to Brough in Westmorland, on the road from London to Carlisle.

Until a few weeks ago I had not thought about it, but one day about then a man came to my house. I opened the door to him and he said "Good morning."

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"Have I seen you before?" I asked, for there was something familiar about him.

"Yes," he said, "you have, you met me about four years ago when you were fishing and we talked about apples and fish."

"I remember," said I. "You're a gardener, got a little place of your own."

"That's it," he said, "and you said I was to come and see you if ever I was this way and look at your trees."

"So I did," I agreed. "I remember you quite well."

"And I'll tell you another thing," he went on. "I want to see that Ellison's Orange as you spoke about, and they ought to be ready now. Have you got some this year?"

"Come in," said I, "and I'll show you."

"One minute," he said, "before I forgets it: you're fond of old things, so you said, and I found this a year or two back and put it aside for you." He brought out a brown-paper packet.

"What is it?" I asked.

"An old paper," he said, "copy of *The Times* newspaper time of Waterloo, and you're welcome; belonged to my wife's mother: in service she was to a big family in London."

This morning I looked at that old paper again, very yellow, very torn at the edges and showing signs of having been read and re-read, folded and re-folded many times.

Here it is in front of me—"June 22, 1815," and in-

The Battle of Waterloo

side is Wellington's Dispatch to Earl Bathurst dated Waterloo, June 19, 1815.

It is too long for me to copy out and might not be of interest, but the Official Bulletin dated June 22 and issued from Downing Street will be of interest to some.

“The Duke of Wellington's Dispatch, dated Waterloo, the 19th June, states that on the preceding day Buonaparte attacked, with his whole force, the British line, supported by a corps of Prussians; which attack, after a long and sanguinary conflict, terminated in the complete OVERTHROW of the ENEMY'S Army, with the loss of ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY pieces of CANNON and TWO EAGLES. During the night, the Prussians, under Marshal Blucher, who joined in the pursuit of the enemy, captured SIXTY GUNS and a large part of Buonaparte's BAGGAGE.

“The allied armies continued to pursue the enemy. Two French generals were taken.”

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That is what I read, and a little later on the same page was that first long list of killed, that began with the Duke of Brunswick and ended with Ensign Brown.

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So having read all the news there was to read in this old paper of June 22, 1815—two sheets—four pages of print, size eleven and a half inches by seventeen and a half inches, No. 9554, Price sixpence, I turned to the

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advertisements; which were not so very different from ours of to-day.

Here is one that might be in any paper this morning:

COTTAGE—WANTED BETWEEN 20 AND 30 MILES from town, a small house at a moderate rent. Address etc., etc.

And here is another that is not quite so likely!

SNUFF-BOX MAKERS WANTED. Two or three first-rate HANDS as SNUFF-BOX MAKERS in gold and silver. Apply to Hockley and Bosworth, Brook St., Holborn.

But all this is a waste of time and has nothing to do with our journey to Westmorland, which came into my head when I read a long advertisement at the top of the second column.

And when you have read this I know that you too will recall at once another advertisement in fiction by a very famous writer.

Let me put the one from *The Times* in first:

EDUCATION—WINTON NR. BOROUGH in Westmorland. BOYS are EDUCATED, furnished with books, boarded, and clothed by the Rev. T. Adamthwaite, D.D., beneficed Curate of Badby, at 22 guineas a year, and PARLOUR BOARDERS, at 40 guineas.

There are no vacations at this school, and from the close attention of Dr. A. and his assistants to the education of his scholars, no school in the Kingdom can boast of finer boys. Dr. A., who was for many years an usher in the public schools,

Twenty-Two Guineas a Year

and tutor to a nobleman's family, attends each day between the hours of 11 and 1 at the Clapham Coffee House, St. Paul's. References to Bishops, clergymen, and laymen of equal eminence.

That is what I read; and, as you will, I immediately thought of Dickens, Nicholas Nickleby and Mr. Squeers. Do you remember the advertisement? Here it is:

EDUCATION. At Mr. Wackford Squeers' Academy, Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, Youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessaries, instructed in all languages living and dead, mathematics, orthography, geometry, astronomy, trigonometry, the use of the globes, algebra, single-stick (if desired), writing, arithmetic, fortification, and every branch of classical literature.

Terms, twenty guineas per annum. NO extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled.

Mr. S. is in town, and attends daily, from one till four, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill.

Nicholas Nickleby was not published until 1839, so you see Charles Dickens may have read this advertisement in this old newspaper just as I have done to-day, or it may have been a common type of advertisement in his days; I do not know. I hope not. Poor little mites! . . . "There are no vacations at this school"! Almost one might write, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." And the length of that journey two hun-

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dred and sixty-five miles or so! When a letter cost a shilling for two hundred and fifty miles.

I know nothing against Dr. Adamthwaite, I know nothing about him, worthy man or another Squeers, but this I do know; I know how those tiny boys must have felt as they left Hicks's Hall on that long long journey.

Of course he may have been kindness itself, only his name sounds rather too much like those bleak northern fells for my southern ears; there is nothing kindly in their place and family names such as one finds in Devonshire and all the south and west.

He may have been—I trust he was—as kind as poor Oliver Goldsmith, though I very much doubt it, and that sentence—"there are no vacations at this school"—has a sinister sound to me.

No kinder man has ever lived than poor Goldsmith, and certainly no kinder usher, the man who would give away the coals out of that great coal scuttle we read of to a poor neighbour, his blankets in college to a poor widow, pawn his coat to save his landlord from gaol, and never so poor and thin and hungry but he could give away his crust and say words of compassion, and when he had nothing to give poor children would play his flute to them.

When he was an usher—as Thackeray said—he spent his earnings in treats for the boys, and the good-natured schoolmaster's wife said that she ought to keep Mr. Goldsmith's money as well as the young gentlemen's.

And now I have just read that advertisement again

Twenty-Two Guineas a Year

and once more looked down that list of casualties—only the first list, to be sure, there were more and more to follow.

And as I read I could but wonder if any relations—any guardians of boys, little boys, who were left fatherless after that battle—read that advertisement also . . . and called at the Clapham Coffee House at St. Paul's and some tiny child was packed off on that long journey to the school where there were no vacations, and where they were fed and educated and supplied with books at the rate of one shilling and threepence farthing a day!

Borough is, I think, Brough, a little town on the main Carlisle—London road, about half-way between Penrith and Greta Bridge over the Tees. The population of Brough in those days was under two thousand and there were two hundred and eighty-seven houses, quite a small place.

Winton was a tiny hamlet one and a half miles from Kirkby Stephen, and Kirkby Stephen is about five miles from Brough on the road to Lancaster.

But of Badly, of which place the Reverend Doctor Adamthwaite was beneficed curate, I can find no trace.

Last time I was on that road from Carlisle I had not read the advertisement or I should have stopped at Brough to inquire.

I have no road map of Westmorland and my old gazetteer does not give Badly.

I remember the road well: it was in June, and on the way I saw such red May in flower as I have never seen before: the colour was deeper and richer than I

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have seen in the south. I wondered why, and now I am wondering if it was in flower when any of those boys had to pass that way. I do not suppose they would have noticed it if it was, their hearts must have been too full of home and perhaps their eyes were too full of tears to see.

CHAPTER IX

YORKSHIRE—WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR—AND ALTERA ROMA

I REMEMBER very well a day or two before Christmas Eve of but a few years ago when I stood in a little general stores of a tiny southern village about six of the evening.

So small was this village that beside a butcher, a baker and a saddler—one of the last of his trade—there were but two other shops. It was a mild evening, as mild as any Christmas I have known, and in this shop was an old country woman, bent and wrinkled, with a pleasant face and those well-worn wiry hands. With her was a little girl of about ten who called her “Granny” and sometimes “Gran.” She too was of the kind that we used to see so long ago going to and from school with aprons and longish skirts, now to be seen no more, little girls who were children, not young women of the world.

“And that,” said the old lady as she collected her parcels, “is all as we come for.”

“Are we going home now, Granny?” asked the girl a little disappointedly.

“No,” said the old lady. “No, we’re going to have a look round first, now as we’ve got here; a good look round, my gal, now as we *are* here.”

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And they did have a look round. I met them more than once. I saw them peering into first one and then another of those little shops: the little girl's eyes beaming at all the Christmas things she saw. I saw them going into one shop and I met them again nearly half a mile away, for it is a long and straggling village, if but few houses, and I met them again in another little shop, the smallest of them all.

"It is very mild," said I.

"You're right," said Granny, "very warm it is."

"Rather tiring walking," said I; "have you far to walk?"

"No, not far," she said, smiling, "matter of a little over three mile—bit mucky down our old lane."

"Do you like Christmas?" I asked the little girl.

She smiled and said nothing.

"And that's a fact she does," said Granny, "and us likes having a good look round, as we don't come very often—now as we *are* here."

And as we parted I thought of all the children arriving in great luxurious cars to all the elaborate Christmas Show Rooms and Christmas Fairs at our great London shops and stores. As I said good-bye to this old soul of over seventy I thought of all the London lights and of all the wonderful windows and display, and then looked back at those tiny shops—lighted with oil lamps—and that long walk home down a muddy lane in the dark.

Yet I knew that they were happy: it was a great treat to them. They had had a good look round whilst they were there.

Now it is not Christmas as I write this, but it all

Yorkshire

came back to me because I thought that as we were in Yorkshire we might as well have a look round whilst we were there. Not at the great manufacturing and mining cities, but at a little village perhaps more typical of the old Yorkshire.

Take Appletreewick, which I mentioned before. I have not been there since 1919, but I do hope it has not altered. If ever you are in Wharfedale and have not seen Appletreewick it will well repay you to go there.

A warm evening in May, a long long walk from a station and some good ale at the inn. Then there was the supper, a supper to remember, and the cosy bed and the sheets that came out of an old-fashioned press and smelt of lavender, and the old disused lead-mine at the back of the inn and the first whitethroats. And of the little garden in front and the walk down the meadows to the river, and the trout—fat jolly trout—that lay under the sycamore trees, and the glorious hills and a rushing beck, and Leeds, great grimy, smoky, noisy Leeds—forgotten as one forgets a dream one does not like.

Eight and a half miles from Skipton and right in the country.

Never mind about Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Barnsley and a dozen more, never mind the great smoking cities, the crowded streets, the rows and rows of ugly houses, which are the saddest sight in all Yorkshire and the greatest blot on the name of the Victorian money-spinners.

Do not pine after Harrogate, Scarborough, Whitby, but when you are in Yorkshire seek out some tiny little

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place as Appletreewick was fifteen years ago and you will see a little bit of the real Yorkshire.

All those great seaside places are no more the real Yorkshire than Margate is Kent or Bournemouth is Hampshire.

So have a good look round, and I hope you will find a cosy inn and a stream with trout and good food and good ale—almost as good as I found at the New Inn Appletreewick so many years ago and remember every minute of my stay!

I believe that when King Harold heard that William had landed in Sussex, just after the great victory at Stamford Bridge, he set out for London by way of York.

York you must see. England would not be England without York—English history I mean.

Volumes and volumes could be, and no doubt have been, written about Yorkshire, and I will tell you just a little in case someone has not read about it.

In earliest times it was the home of a wonderful tribe of Celts called Brigantes or Hillmen, whose headquarters were at Boroughbridge: though some say the capital was York itself and called *Caer Eborac*; then the Romans came under Hadrian—the Sixth Legion came to York and remained there for three hundred years. York was Roman then and called *Eboracum*. Later came the Saxons and the Kingdom of Northumbria, and it was called *Eoforwic*, different names but still the capital and always the same city.

And of all the different races and different people and different periods that York has seen since the days

William the Conqueror—Altera Roma

of the Brigantes, the occupation by the Romans is the most outstanding of all. Still their memory remains, still here, if anywhere, you seem to hear the marching, the words of command, and see the eagles of the Legions, of the Sixth Legion clearest of all.

Networks of Roman roads were made all round and all leading to York and protecting York.

Nearly nineteen hundred years ago they came under Hadrian, as I say, and three hundred years that Legion stayed. Can't you imagine the coming and going, the new commanders, the reinforcements, the arrival of fresh officers and men?

"Altera Roma" they called Eboracum, for it was the nearest approach to Rome itself. For Eboracum was not Roman in the same way as Bath.

Bath was never a fortress nor was it a military camp. Bath was not a colony. Verulam, Colchester, Lincoln, Gloucester all were places of importance, but Bath was but a small place—famous for its hot springs, its baths. Bath was *Aquæ Salis*, but Eboracum was . . . Rome in Britain.

When officers had leave from Eboracum, officers of the Sixth Legion, they went to Bath if they could not go so far as Rome. You will find tombstones in Bath to some of those old officers who came to Bath and died there. Three are to officers of the Sixth Legion from Eboracum, from York.

I will say nothing of the Cathedral, for you can read all there is to read of that.

You must see this old city built so long ago where the Foss joins the Ouse, and remember too that march of William the Conqueror when, after leaving South-

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wark, he marched round London to Wallingford. And he did this because the men of London, all honour to them, held the old bridge! London Bridge!

Kent had offered no resistance. Canterbury had surrendered, even Winchester so far away submitted for very fear of his coming there, but the men of London held the bridge!

Middlesex men were there. No wonder the men of the Middlesex Regiment are called "The Diehards," earned hundreds of years later.

London Bridge was held, so he marched right round London to Berkhamsted and barred the way from the North. Why? Because York was and is still the second city in England. In 1068 he curbed a rising in Exeter and then marched to York and left a strong garrison. Came a great rising in the next year, 1069, when aided by the Danes the Saxons took York and slew the whole garrison.

Then came William again, with a great army. He bought off the Danes by letting them plunder the Saxon wealth of Peterborough Abbey, and then he took York and deliberately laid waste the whole of Yorkshire that lies from York to the Tees.

That Christmas he spent in York. Not a very merry one for such Saxons as were left: most of them were left to starve in the empty fields and burnt-out houses. All along the coast the destruction was terrible, so that no Danes could find shelter if they landed to help.

It is said that in a famine which followed one hundred thousand people died.

Fifty years later the country was still bare and deserted for sixty miles north of York.

Altera Roma

Of Yorkshire in later times, of the Wars of the Roses, of the Civil War, there is so much to say that should be said, yet cannot; still it is of old Rome you should be thinking when you see York. Rome and York, Eboracum—*Altera Roma*.

CHAPTER X

FROM YORK TO LONDON—TOWTON BATTLE—AND RED AND WHITE LIONS

THE journey from London to York is more often spoken of than that from York to London.

Dick Turpin the highwayman in all probability never did ride that famous ride so picturesquely told by Harrison Ainsworth, but he was hanged in York in 1739.

Long before his day and death there had been a famous ride to York, from Gadshill to York, in 1676. It is said that Swift Nick Nevison robbed a sailor at Gadshill at four in the morning and was in York at a quarter to eight that night, thus establishing an alibi, but he too was hanged at York in 1684, perhaps the most well known of all, for is he not the only highwayman mentioned in a famous history of England—Macaulay's?

Still we are coming home from York now and will try and recall a little of what it was like on the road in the old days.

It was a long way to go in the old coaching days, one hundred and ninety-nine miles and a quarter to Hicks's Hall, where they measured from at that time. I am afraid I cannot tell you who Hicks was, but I can tell

From York to London—Towton Battle

you that a hundred years ago the Barnet Road and all roads to the North were measured from the place "where Hicks's Hall formerly stood; viz. at the end of St. John's Lane, St. John's Street, West Smithfield. A stone in the front of one of the houses has an inscription pointing out the spot."

In those days of coaching the mail coach left York at six in the evening and it cost elevenpence to send a letter to London.

After leaving York or rather on the way out of York stood Dring Houses, the Palace of the Archbishop of York; then you crossed the River Wharfe a few miles farther on and came to Tadcaster.

Tadcaster is said to be an old Roman city called Calcaria, and as it is exactly nine miles south-west of York it probably was Calcaria, because Antoninus in his famous Itinerary mentions this position.

Three miles farther on was Towton, and it is worth mentioning because here was fought a great battle.

There was a battle at Tadcaster in Charles I's time, 1642, between the Earl of Newcastle and Sir Thomas Fairfax from eleven in the morning until five in the evening, after which Sir Thomas marched off to Selby.

But at Towton there was a terrible battle on Palm Sunday, March 29, 1461, in the Wars of the Roses.

York and Lancaster. Edward IV commanding the Yorkists with 48,666 men. Nearly forty thousand altogether were killed in this battle and thousands drowned in the river trying to cross. The Lancastrians lost the day although they had sixty thousand men under the Duke of Somerset. A hundred years or more ago a well-known English writer said, "the folly of a

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nation was fully exhibited, between 30,000 and 40,000 Englishmen fell in deciding the question whether a tyrant or an idiot should be their master."

And now on to Brotherton and over the Aire and on to Pontefract and so to Doncaster, which in spite of its position—a good strategic one—does not seem to have had any famous battles except those upon the famous Town Moor—both of horse and man.

Pontefract should be remembered for its name because it means the Broken Bridge. At Pontefract poor King Richard the Second died in the castle after being moved from the Tower.

Every mile of this old road through Yorkshire is a mile of English history. Pontefract was besieged four times at least in the Great Rebellion.

At Bawtry you are almost out of Yorkshire, and at Scrooby, a mile and a quarter away, you are in Nottinghamshire and close to Barnby Moor Inn, one hundred and forty-eight miles (all but a quarter) from London and just over fifty-one from York.

And as Pontefract is a very old town and was built where two rivers join, or very near that place, the rivers Aire and Calder, I think we will stay the night there at an old inn, if it is still standing. It was a hundred years ago and long before that too—the Red Lion. But before we do so I have forgotten to say that Pontefract is sometimes called Pomfret. Once upon a time it was called Taddenesscylf, in Saxon days, but I do not know what it means, or who first made Pomfret or Pontefract cakes, which have been made since Queen Elizabeth's days and are made with liquorice and are really lozenges. The Pomfret people used to grow a lot

Red and White Lions

of liquorice, which is unusual in England, the only other place being Mitcham in Surrey.

And now for the Red Lion and some Pontefract ale, which was very good, so a Yorkshireman told me long before I went that way, and though I have tasted ale I like better, there is nothing much the matter with Pontefract ale, and they pride themselves on the malt they use, and once upon a time there was a famous well much esteemed for brewing of ale.

The Red Lion was a busy house on this road a hundred years ago: it was still there when last I came along that road, and I see from a list of inns that it was there in 1930. Long may it last; for the Red Lion at Pontefract was the first Red Lion in Yorkshire on that old road; and the Red Lion was the emblem of the house of Lancaster.

Edward the Fourth had the White Lion as his badge.

Years ago in Chester was a famous old coaching inn, the White Lion, and you will find many White Lions on the borders of Wales as well as in England.

The old White Lion at Chester is no more. I know that for a fact, because I wrote and asked the Librarian at Chester County Library if he could tell me why that inn was called the White Lion. He very kindly replied, and told me that the old inn had long since been pulled down, but he told me that in the *Taverns of Old England* by Maskell the White Lion is referred to as the badge of Edward the Fourth, and the book continues: "As white and red roses were the emblems of York and Lancaster, so white and red lions were the emblems of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster." He told me

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too that in Leopold Wagner's *Names and their Meaning* it says: "Where the innkeeper was not bound by any ties of gratitude or regard to the ground landlord he evinced his loyalty to the reigning monarch by adopting a portion of the royal arms. As examples of this class—the White Lion of Edward the Fourth as Earl of March."

I have found out that lots of inns on the Welsh Marches derive the "White Lion" from the Earls of March.

And since we are talking about White Lions, it may be of interest to say that before Simon de Montfort was defeated at Evesham he saw what he thought were his banners being carried by some advancing troops and thought they were his son's army coming to help him. Instead they were banners that had been captured from his son, who had been defeated by Prince Edward unknown to Simon.

The man who defeated Simon that day was Roger Mortimer, one of the Lords of the Welsh Marches who came up and cut off his retreat from the south bank of the Avon. There was only one bridge and Simon was in a trap. His men begged him to escape by the bridge whilst there was yet time; but he refused and died fighting against overwhelming numbers with two of his sons. De Montfort's badge was a White Lion.

A lion of silver was included in his arms, the arms of Le Conte Leicester or the Good Earl Simon.

All this has nothing to do with Pontefract, but there in the Red Lion you will be in the first house in Yorkshire whose landlord had the courage, or audacity,

Red and White Lions

if you will, to raise the Red Lion of Lancaster on Yorkshire soil.

Perhaps you will think of it next time you see the White Lion as the signboard of an inn, and even if you see a Red Lion you can think about it too. Many an old White Lion inn owes its name to those old Earls of March, but, as I say, perhaps they took it from old Simon first of all.

And now that we have reached Pontefract we will rest awhile.

Perhaps you have been to the Red Lion at Pontefract, perhaps you are there now. Well, if you are I wish you good luck and so fold up my old map—stained a little at the corners from rain that caught me unexpectedly as I too came down that old road, and so I leave you in the old inn in the old town with its old houses and its rivers, its lozenges and ale.

CHAPTER XI

WHETSTONE—EDWARD MORTIMER, AND THE VILLAGE OF THE BUCKLE

*A*T Pontefract we will rest awhile under the sign of the House of Lancaster, and as we rest I will tell you a story. Whether you will believe it or not I do not know, but I can tell you that it is very true to me, and the reason why I mention it now is because I have been writing about the Wars of the Roses and Edward IV and the Earls of March and Red and White Lions.

Exactly eleven miles from London lies the town of Barnet. To-day I am sure there are houses all the way from London, rows and rows of houses and shops, but when I saw it last there were green fields with but two or three houses between Whetstone and Barnet Hill.

All along this great road from London went travellers to Holyhead, Carlisle or Lincoln, and along this road they returned as we were returning when we came to Pontefract.

So many people were there that there were a great many inns. Not for the people who lived along that road, but to cater for the various kinds and conditions of men who rode that way.

You may remember that Barnet was the meeting-

Whetstone

place of *Oliver Twist* and the Artful Dodger, and that Dickens wrote, "every other house in Barnet was a tavern large or small."

And not only Barnet, there were many taverns from "Tally-Ho" corner at Finchley to the "Old Bull" or Bull or Black Bull—I forget its exact name, but it was the last tavern in Whetstone, a little village (in those days) in Middlesex, on the border of Hertfordshire.

One of the first taverns in Whetstone was called the Griffin—and outside the Griffin, on the day of which I am writing, was a signboard on a post, and at the foot of that post was a great stone.

I do not know where it came from. I do not know how long it had been there or if it is there still, it was a long time ago, but I can tell you that it was some two feet long, a foot and a half wide and the same in height. I write from memory.

The stone was a hard kind of stone, not ordinary sandstone, and was rather curved in at the top, so that on a wet day a little water would collect on it. The colour was brownish-red with a little grey perhaps. Tradition had it that this stone gave the name to the village and that King Edward IV sharpened his sword upon it before the battle of Barnet, which was but two miles or so away.

So much for this stone, but one day, when having turned my back on London and walked as far as Whetstone, I saw a man sitting on this stone. It was early in the morning, the shops had not yet opened, an early morning in June just before they made the first hay for which in those days all Hertfordshire was famous.

England all the Way

I remember that morning very well. It was June, as I said, the sun was shining, the cocks were crowing, the cuckoo was calling down in the valley of the Brent, the flag was flying on the tower of old Barnet Church. I was very young, London was nine miles behind me. I had five golden sovereigns in my pocket and all was well with the world!

So early was it that not a man, woman or child was on the old road in Whetstone except the man who sat on the stone, and myself and a black-and-white dog at the cross roads.

The man had a stick between his legs and was holding it at the top, this I remember; he was about fifty at most, and his hat was off on the ground beside him, and he looked me straight in the face. Here was no tramp. His clothes were very poor, but his face might have been a model for many an artist. Long, refined, intelligent, and with a rather short but wonderfully clearly cut nose and short upper lip. I can see him now. A pleasant face. So different from the usual type one met upon the road, waiting for the Union to open at Barnet. That old Union where they had—so men said in casual wards from London to York—whalebones at the gates and bones to eat and nothing more, for at the gateway were, if not whalebones, something long and grey and mysterious that looked like whalebones.

I saluted him with my ash stick. "Good morning," said I. "A lovely day."

"First rate," he answered, "but it will be hot; we want rain, the grass is backward."

"I don't," said I, "I am walking to York."

Whetstone

"All the way?" he asked.

"As long as my money lasts," I answered.

"A hundred and ninety miles," said he.

"You know it then?" said I.

"Every yard," he answered.

"How many miles a day do you reckon to go?" he asked.

"Fifteen at most," I replied. "How far are you going?"

"Barnet," he answered, "hay-ing."

And then I saw that lying behind the stone was a scythe handle, with the blade all wrapped in sacking by its side.

"You're not Irish?" I said; "mostly Irish this way hay-time."

"Hereford. Had your breakfast?"

"Meant to have it here," I told him, "but they seem to be all shut up."

"They're open at the Bull," he said, "open at five o'clock for them as has got money. They always have some hot coffee and cold ham and bread for the hay-carters. Stands a bit back off the road, about half a mile along. Not much of a place, but it's clean."

"Had yours yet?" I asked.

"No," said he.

"Come on then," said I.

"No," he said.

"Don't you want any?" I asked.

"I could do with it," he replied, "but I'm not cadging."

"I know that," I agreed, "but . . ."

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"Lend me a trifle if you like," he said, "I'll pay you back first week of haying. I can earn a good bit o' money then."

"Come on," said I again.

Eggs and bacon and coffee on the road to York and a little of his story.

Small farmer's son, owned their own land Herefordshire, falling prices, foreign competition, especially in apples and corn and price of bullocks . . . a field sold here . . . another field . . . mortgage . . . the open road and his scythe.

"I could tell you had seen better days," I told him after breakfast, as he shared my tobacco: "sort of instinct I suppose, but you were bred on the land, I knew it . . ."

"And owned it," he said slowly.

"For a long time?" I asked.

"Hundreds of years," he answered. . . . "I'm telling no lie . . . back to King Henry the Eighth my family held this land in the Wye Valley."

"I believe you," said I.

"It's true," he said simply. "There were people of my name back there before that: stones to them in the old churchyard: can't read the names though, just catch an M and an O and an R now and again."

"What was your name?" I asked as I looked at my watch . . . I had a long way to go.

"Mortimer," he said rather sadly.

"What!" I cried.

"Mortimer," he repeated. "Heard of it?"

"It's a King's name," said I.

"Aye," he said slowly—he was a slow-speaking man,

Edward Mortimer

very different from the Welsh—"so my old father told me—Mortimer . . ."

"Not Roger?" I asked.

"Edward," he answered. "Grandfather was Roger."

"Wait a minute," I said, "this is too good to be true. You're Edward Mortimer?"

"That's my name."

"You were sitting on that stone! My good man," said I, "you might be King of England. Edward the Fourth won the battle of Barnet in 1471 and came this very way."

"Edward the Fourth?" he asked.

"Yes," I told him, "Earl of March! A Mortimer and King of England."

"Where did his family come from?"

"Somewhere near Wales on the borders in those days—but before that they came from France, with William the Conqueror."

"You know a lot of history!"

"Very little," said I, "but I've read about the Mortimers. . . . You come from an old Hereford family, you are related to the Earls of March . . . to King Edward the Fourth. . . ."

He smiled. "My old Dad used to say something about the old Mortimers when he was a bit peart with cider . . . not that he was a drunkard though. Well, give me your name and address please, and I'll send you the money when I'm paid. Could you make it five shillings? You'll be paid."

"Ten if you like," said I.

"How much have you got?" said he.

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"Five pounds," said I.

"And all the way to York and back on that? Lodgings and all?"

"I'll make it Newark," said I, and I did.

A fortnight afterwards I had a letter; inside was a postal order for ten shillings . . . with thanks from . . . Edward Mortimer.

I never saw him again.

I know very well that many people may not believe this story, but there it is. Some time ago I wrote in a book about a man who told me his name was Turn Again Whittington; some people would not believe that either, and yet only this week I read in the paper of a worthy draper who had just died, leaving a considerable fortune, and who was called Christmas Day Jones. I have not seen that before.

Many years after my meeting with Edward Mortimer at Whetstone I read Borrow's *Wild Wales*; you may remember that he met a man called Dafydd Tibbot who was wheeling stones in a barrow for the repair of the road, and that Borrow decided "that this poor creature is the descendant of some desperate Norman Tibault," and he went on to say: "I have known a Mortimer munching poor cheese and bread under a hedge on an English road" . . . so you see my story is not quite so extraordinary as it seems to be after all: except that I met him on the way to Barnet.

And one other similar happening I remember not so very long ago. It was late October, and with a companion I came walking at evening into Lewes over the

Village of the Buckle

downs from Offham, and as we walked he told me of the ancient family of Pelham, Earls of Chichester, and of one very early Pelham who had, I think he said, distinguished himself as a gallant knight at Poitiers in the great victory. And he went on to tell me how they were afterwards known as "of the buckle" because he had taken some great King or Prince prisoner and had been rewarded with his sword-buckle. And he went on to say that these same Pelhams lived at Laughton near Lewes and that Laughton was known as the "Village of the Buckle" in days gone by.

All this and more, much more, he told me that dark October evening as we came down into the lights of old Lewes, for he was a very talkative man and would talk without ceasing, so that as we walked I sometimes paid no heed to him and followed my own thoughts to the accompaniment of his voice, which was not unpleasant.

I mention this as a reason for not remembering exactly what he told me, whether it was King John of France or who it was that had the sword-buckle first, but I do remember that it was all about the Pelhams, some or one of whom he had met and liked.

So we came into Lewes and down the hill a little way and into an inn which he told me was the Pelham Arms. I remember it very well, it was cheerful after the damp outside. And having rested awhile we went down the hill again and by a winding narrow road or turning and stopped at a little tobacconist's in a side street—quite a small shop it was—and bought some tobacco, and the first thing I noticed when I went into that shop was the name of the shopkeeper, where we

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had stopped by chance. The name was Pelham: for all I know the shop may be there still.

I do not suppose he was any relation to the Earl of Chichester or to that gallant knight at Poitiers—but it may be so.

Legitimate descendant, I mean. The Reverend S. Baring-Gould wrote in his *Country Life*: "The more one studies our old parish registers the more convinced one is that some of the best blood in England is to be found amongst the tradesmen of our country towns."

Two or three hundred years ago many of those old landed families had as many as nine, twelve and sometimes more sons!

For the eldest there was the inheritance, a little for the next perhaps, and then Soldier—Sailor—Parson. But the rest?

Failing a "good" marriage they went into trade and married, or farmed and married a farmer's daughter, or a tradesman's daughter: it's all in those old registers if you like to seek it.

Soldier, Sailor, Tinker, Tailor, Apothecary, Plough-boy. . . . Who knows how the old squires must have scratched their heads—under their wigs—and repeated those lines over and over again, wondering what to do with all the boys. Let alone the girls, poor dears!

I know of one family—an old South Country family—where there were twelve sons; their descendants are scattered all over the world. Once they were amongst the most important people in that county, now they are to be found in direct descent in every profession and trade down to fishermen on the beach,

Village of the Buckle

and all in two hundred years, and all not far from the old old home, now gone.

So you see I shall continue to think and believe that I met and breakfasted with a descendant of the Royal House of York that sunny morning in June, on the way to Barnet, with five golden sovereigns in my pocket and not a care in the world.

I shall always remember how I helped that Royal Exchequer over a temporary difficulty and I shall never forget the pleasure I had when the money came back. Not because of the money itself—welcome as it was no doubt—but because he had not forgotten and had kept to his word.

Long years have passed since then, but I can still see that figure on the old stone, the long empty road with York a hundred and ninety miles away and London at my back. . . . Whatever faults the old Mortimers may have had—and they had many—the only one I met, the Edward Mortimer who breakfasted with me at the Black Bull, Whetstone, at six o'clock in the morning when Edward the Seventh was King of England, was an honest English gentleman.

And now for the road again. Back to the old coaching road from York to London, because old Pontefract was not really on that road at all.


If you look at the coach road you will see that it ran from York by Tadcaster and Sherburn to Ferrybridge. It did not run through Pontefract, which was about two miles or so from the division of the road at Ferrybridge.

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Travellers for Durham and the North who did not wish to stay in York would push on from Ferrybridge to Thirsk. Still although Pontefract was not exactly on the road from York, many people stayed there on the way. I believe that to-day the usual road from York to Doncaster is by Selby, but a hundred years ago the coaches ran, as I say, by Tadcaster and past Pontefract to Ferrybridge and thence to Doncaster. When I last came along from York I came by Pontefract and so on until at last Newark was reached in safety, and there was a great deal of excitement in the old Market Square, where they were holding a fair with all kinds of stalls and booths, all within a stone's throw of my inn, which was the old Clinton Arms on the Great North Road in Newark-on-Trent.

CHAPTER XII

THE ROADS OF ENGLAND—BURTON ALE—THOMAS GUY OF LONDON

N that great road of the old coaching days that ran from Bristol to Sheffield and Leeds lay many famous towns: Gloucester—Tewkesbury—Worcester—Bromsgrove—Birmingham—Lichfield—Burton-upon-Trent.

They are all on old coaching maps, and of all the straight stretches of road, the road that ran from Derby to Lichfield was the straightest twenty-five miles or so of all that long one hundred and sixty-two miles.

A good eleven miles from Derby and some fourteen from Lichfield lay Burton-upon-Trent, a long way from Newark, I agree, but both are on the Trent.

Since we are in Nottinghamshire we must follow up that river Trent a little way, as far as Burton if we can, for here if anywhere is a famous English town.

Burton-upon-Trent is not along our road to London, but we will have a look at it presently, if there is time, before we take the road to London, and for the river Trent we must spare a day or two at least.

Do you remember what old Walton wrote? He put Trent third upon his list of rivers and said: "Trent, so

England all the Way

called from thirty kinds of fishes that are found in it, or for that it receiveth thirty lesser rivers; who having his fountain in Staffordshire, and gliding through the counties of Nottingham, Lincoln, Leicester, and York, augmenteth the turbulent current of Humber, the most violent stream of all the isle."

Trent is still a mighty stream about two hundred and fifty miles long; at places, as fishermen for bream will tell you, it is thirty-eight feet deep at normal level. Such a spot is Dunham Dubbs, some ten miles south-east of East Retford, a famous fishing spot when I was last that way.

And for mighty bending, turning, curving, what river bends and turns and curves like Trent?

Partly because of this, and more particularly because it rises on high ground and flows at last through level lands, there were many many locks quite long ago.

Between Cavendish Bridge and Torksey Lock an old fisherman told me the river fell nearly seventy feet, so no wonder there are rushing rapids where barbel love to wait.

Lower down, far away at Carlton Mill, you will find a wind-swept open country that is rather bleak to me, but here and there, as at Meering Ferry, there were trees beyond the banks and trees along the hedgerows. I wonder if they are there still? I hope so, for this was the place I liked the best along the lower Trent.

And all round about this river lie Nottinghamshire and Derby, with Yorkshire not so very far away, and in these three counties was there not the ancient Forest of Sherwood with Robin Hood and the Dragon of Wantley? From Nottingham to Worksop was all

The Roads of England

forest then, and no doubt there were many dragons. Is not the dragon on the Royal Arms of England? Did not the old Kings of Wessex have a dragon for their standard and under which Harold fought at Hastings? Yes, and so did the Plantagenets and the Tudors, down to Queen Mary, who substituted an eagle.

And now let us leave the broad highway to London at Newark and crossing into Derbyshire look in at Burton-upon-Trent. Another old road this one.

I should like to write a whole volume about the roads of England. High-roads and by-roads. Great roads that were busy with continual traffic, the coming and going of all men who used those roads. The road that was a road long before the Romans came. The road that carried the islanders down to the coast. Roads that teem with the pleasures and trade and sorrows of men. The road that links up village with village, village with hamlet, and hamlet with farm, but a road that is older than the oldest main road. Little roads that end in a grass-grown track over the Downs, or wander on over the hills and through woods. Roads that took men back from the work they loved to the homes they loved. Work without love is toil. Many men seeking pleasure only find toil. Happy are those who in their work find pleasure. The joy of the well-drawn furrow, the swing of the scythe, the skill of the woodman's axe and the blacksmith's hammer.

And now for Burton.

Ask any man you meet, a labourer on any farm, a coal-heaver, a navvy, anyone who works by the sweat

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of his brow, ask, I say, any one of these "What's Burton?" He won't say "A town upon the river Trent," he will say "Good Ale."

And I will not dispute it. Burton ale is good. Ale has always been the drink of Englishmen. The Saxons, it is true, called it "beere," and they named barley, beerlegh, because of the drink that they made from it. The Danes, however, called it "ael" as we speak of ale.

Englishmen of every type have written in praise of ale: take Izaak Walton and George Borrow. Two men of widely different type.

Walton wrote: ". . . give us some of your best barley-wine, the good liquor that our honest forefathers did use to drink of; the drink which preserved their health, and made them live so long, and to do so many good deeds."

And George Borrow: "Oh, genial and gladdening is the power of good ale, the true and proper drink of Englishmen."

If any man has not read either of these two writers I beg him to read both their books—the *Compleat Angler* and *Lavengro*—and if he does not find more true religion in old Walton's book than in any other book I know—not excluding poor old Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*—I shall be very disappointed.

But to return to Burton-on-Trent, as it is now called.

I have an old book, and in this book it says: "The chief production of the town is ale, and its excellence is deservedly celebrated in most parts of England: a curious practice prevails in the brewing of this article, hard water being used in preference to soft, which cer-

Burton Ale

tainly makes a great difference in the strength, and is accounted for by Dr. Darwin, on the supposition that some of the saccharine acid in malt forms a kind of mineral sugar by its combination with the calcareous earth of hard water, which, like true sugar, is convertible into spirits."

Now this Dr. Darwin was Dr. Erasmus Darwin, who was born at Newark (at Elston Hall) in 1731. He was a physician who practised at Lichfield, he had an eight-acre garden of botanical value, and he was the greatest advocate of *temperance in drinking*.

For as a physiologist he knew the value of good ale and as a physician also, but like all good physicians he knew that ale should be your servant and not your master.

Dr. Erasmus Darwin was the grandfather of the great Charles Robert Darwin, F.R.S.—I need say no more about that great Charles Darwin except that his father was Doctor Robert Darwin, F.R.S., of Shrewsbury and that his mother was a daughter of Josiah Wedgwood the Potter. I wonder if old Dr. Darwin of Lichfield ever thought that he would have two such famous grandsons as Charles Darwin and Francis Galton, yet he was the grandfather of both.

But I must say a little about George Borrow again. Do you recall his return visit to Bala and how he had been looking forward to the wonderful ale?

Let me copy it out here, from *Wild Wales*, written in the time of the Crimea.

He was in the White Lion at Bala.

"Of the dinner I had nothing to complain, but the ale which accompanied it was very bad. This was the

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more mortifying, for remembering the excellent ale I had drunk at Bala some months previously, I had, as I came along the gloomy roads the present evening, been promising myself a delicious treat on my arrival.

“ ‘This is very bad ale,’ said I to the freckled maid, ‘very different from what I drank in the summer, when I was waited on by Tom Jenkins.’ ”

“ ‘It is the same ale, Sir,’ said the maid, ‘but the last in the cask; and we shan’t have any more for six months, when he will come again to brew for the summer; but we have very good porter, Sir, and first-rate Allsopp.’ ”

“ ‘Allsopp’s ale,’ said I, ‘will do for July and August, but scarcely for the end of October. However, bring me a pint; I prefer it at all times to porter.’ ”

So you see all people do not think alike or did not a long time ago, and assuredly will not do so a very long time hence. Old Dr. Erasmus Darwin wrote about Burton ale being so strong in about 1766. In 1854 George Borrow says Allsopp (Burton) ale will do for July but is no good for the end of October; and so it goes on.

I heard a story about Burton ale once. A very long time ago, the Army in India wanted an ale that was not too strong but which would stand the long voyage—in sailing-ship days—and the hot climate. So the Army, having at that time, at any rate, someone with brains, got into touch with Burton-upon-Trent.

I will not mention the name of the brewers, you will see it any day if you keep your eyes open, but they

Burton Ale

made a special brew which they called "India Pale Ale."

Away for India sailed the good ship with many a barrel of this ale aboard, but the winds were too much for her, and when the winds dropped came fog and rocks and she got no farther than the Cornish coast, where many a good ship and many a Spanish galleon has broken up before.

At low tide some Cornishmen—always ready to appreciate a good thing—found a cask of ale wedged between some rocks.

They tapped it with a mattock ; it is easily done, and a bucket is always lying handy where fishermen are about. They liked it. "This," they said, "is ale such as we have never drunk before. Talk about Bodmin and Truro and St. Austell ale . . . if this is India Pale Ale, that's the ale for we."

The fame of this ale spread all over Cornwall and then all over the world, and thus to England: for in those days England to a Cornishman was a far-away country beyond Devon, which county they looked upon as their hereditary enemy, and England lay beyond.

That was the origin of the world-wide renown of Burton ale.

Still, I have heard another tale ; it was this. It may be true or not, but it was told to me by a very old General, a dear old General who might have come straight out of that delightful little book called *Jack-anapes*. I hope you remember him.

Well, this old General told me that in 1815 (of course he did not pretend he had been there) Burton

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ale won the battle of Waterloo, and I should not be surprised if it was true.

You have heard, of course, of the old tale about the Duke of Wellington and "the playing fields of Eton." You have heard (I hope) of Bill Adams, but you may not have heard what my old friend told me so many years ago. This is what he said: "At Waterloo a great number of our troops were only raw Militiamen, with very little training, but they knew how to obey orders. The question was 'Would they fight?' Well, it so happened that a consignment of Burton ale had been received from England the day before the battle and had been left at a farm called La Haye Sainte. When the Duke of Wellington took up his position he gave orders that in every square of English infantry there was to be a hogshead of this ale. 'Tell the lads,' he said, 'that the Frenchies are after it! They'll fight!' . . . and they did."

Other people have fought for it too. In King Charles I's time many battles were fought round Burton. The town was besieged again and again. First the Royalists won, and then Cromwell's men . . . but all the time the brewers went on brewing.

And in quite recent times did not a famous firm of Burton brewers send a cask of this ale to the late Professor Saintsbury? I think they did: and I am very sure he did not send it back again, for Professor Saintsbury knew what was good in other things than literature.

Here we should leave all this strange land and make for home again, be it south or south-west; but before

Thomas Guy of London

we do so, a name has just jumped up out of my old map—as names will sometimes. It is Tamworth. Tamworth is on the borders of Staffordshire and Warwickshire and is some seven miles from old Lichfield. Why has it jumped up? Because if we had gone home by Lichfield instead of back to Newark, gone back to London by the old Holyhead and Chester road, Tamworth would be the first town after Lichfield, and because I want to tell you that in Tamworth old Thomas Guy built a hospital just as he did in Southwark.

I do not know why. Thomas Guy was not born in Tamworth, he had, so far as I know, nothing to do with Tamworth; his father was a lighterman and Guy was born in London, close to the Thames, in 1644.

He was a bookseller and dealt in English Bibles imported from Holland. He started with two hundred pounds capital, but made a fortune by selling out of South Sea stock at the *right moment*! In 1707 he built new wards for St. Thomas's Hospital. In building and endowing his own or Guy's Hospital he spent £238,295, as well as building almshouses at Tamworth. Now there is almost no end to all the good works old Thomas Guy did, and yet they say he was an "intensely selfish and avaricious man"! That was his reputation when alive. They said too that he was "of mean appearance and with a melancholy countenance."

Well, if he was it is a great pity that there have not been more like him. Thousands must have lived and died since then who would bless the old bookseller

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of Cornhill and Lombard Street, and his speculation in the South Sea stock.

I said just now that I do not know why he did so much for Tamworth; perhaps his mother came from Tamworth. I should like to know.

I suppose that if he had lived in this or the last century he would have been made a Peer—Lord Guy of Tamworth perhaps, but somehow I do not think he would have accepted any title. That great hospital at Southwark is more lasting, more enduring than any title or honour bestowed upon any man.

Old Thomas Guy will be remembered when hundreds of lords have been forgotten.

And thinking of all this has reminded me that, as I said just now, Tamworth is partly in Warwickshire. Have you seen Guy's Cliff near Warwick? If you have, that has nothing to do with our Mr. Thomas Guy, it was the hermitage of Guy of Warwick—Sir Guy of Warwick—the hero of such wonderful adventures in the old thirteenth-century story. There is no end to his deeds of daring and his wonderful encounters, but the one I like best is the story of his victory over the famous Dun Cow on Dunsmore Heath near Warwick, and the account of his journey to Normandy and the way he defeated all the competitors in the great tournament at Rouen is marvellous indeed.

Still, without wishing to belittle all or any of the numerous (and mostly mythical) exploits of the great Sir Guy of Warwick, the hero of a hundred fights, I think that when the time comes, the benefits to mankind, the helping hand to the suffering poor and victories over death that were made possible by old

Thomas Guy of London

Thomas Guy will not be forgotten where such things are recorded.

And perhaps at long last, perhaps even now, that melancholy countenance may be wreathed in smiles of gladness as the good work and the great fight against disease, pain, and suffering go on by night and by day, and many a mother, a father, a son, would, if they only knew, think of that old man, son of a Thames lighter-man, who died two days after Christmas Day . . . December 27th, 1724, aged eighty years . . . and say "God Rest His Soul."

CHAPTER XIII

AN OLD MAP—DERBY—KING GEORGE THE SECOND —AND A COBBLER

IF you should come across an old road map of England of about a hundred years ago it is well worth studying.

There is an old lame cobbler I know who had one framed in his shop. He was a very good cobbler, did his work well and used good leather, but he lived a long and tiring walk from my house. In spite of this, however, I used to take him work in order to look at this map, for he would not lend it to me. Perhaps he guessed that this was all I came for, and once I had seen what I went to see, his shop would receive no more work from me! It is not a large map—about twenty-one inches from north to south—and one of the first places that my eyes find is Derby. On this map Derby seems to be in the middle of England. I know that it is not and that Loughborough is supposed to be the centre, but there it is.

From Derby your eyes will find Newark, Lincoln and then go right away to Spurn Head at the mouth of the Humber. I wish you could see the map, and I am sure you would see what I mean.

As we have just left Nottinghamshire, Newark came

An Old Map—Derby

back to me, and then Derby and Spurn Head, all because of that map I used to go and look at. When I thought of this I remembered that years ago there used to be a seaport called Ravenspur near this Spurn Head, and on very old maps indeed it is sometimes called Ravenspurn, or Ravenser, and once in a very old book I saw it called Ravensrode. So you see names of places are very often spelt differently just as the names of people are, from one generation to another.

By whichever of these three names then it may have been called the longest, I do not know, but I do know that it will never be called anything again because that old seaport is no more. The sea has been unkind to Ravenspur: through countless centuries, storms sweeping over the North Sea attacked it again and again.

In the year 1346, and again in 1357, there were terrible storms that did a great deal of damage all along the east coast, and to Ravenspur particularly. Old Dunwich down on the Suffolk coast, once a famous place and with a great harbour, suffered too. The same storm that battered Ravenspur filled up the harbour at Dunwich, and then more and more storms made the sea encroach upon the land and Dunwich crumbled away. Still Ravenspur was a seaport long after 1357, and in 1399 King Henry IV landed there—when he was Earl of Derby—to take the crown from Richard II. Here too at this old seaport, now gone, landed Edward IV in March 1471, to hurry to London, where he was received with great enthusiasm, and a few weeks afterwards fought and won the battle of Barnet on the fourteenth of April: all of which you know.

England all the Way

Soon after this Ravenspur was swept away altogether, so no more kings will land there, York or Lancaster.

You can take your eyes away from Spurn Head now and away from that old town at the mouth of the Humber and come down through Lincoln, Newark and Nottingham to Derby.

I want you to follow that road on the old map—a cross road this—before we go on to London.

I want you to look at Derby on that or any old map of the roads and see how the roads meet there.

South from London, south-west from Lichfield and Worcester, north-west from Manchester and all Lancashire, and due north, the great road through Yorkshire by Chesterfield and Wakefield to Newcastle, Edinburgh and Scotland.

Look at it all well. Then you will see where the last Royal Prince—Charles Edward—turned back—without the crown he sought, the crown of England. Grandson of James II. He had not landed at Ravenspur as the others had done, but on a little island.

Down from a little island in the Hebrides he had come, to Edinburgh: cleverly avoided an army at Newcastle and came on through Lancashire by Manchester to Derby.

He had relied on the Catholic squires of Lancashire; only one joined him.

Look at that old map again. Bonnie Prince Charlie is at Derby with his army of Highlanders, and then the news comes that along each of those great roads—south, south-west, and north—King George's troops were marching, whilst King George II himself was waiting

King George the Second—And a Cobbler

at the head of an army outside London to fight him in person.

Back again to Scotland! To Culloden and defeat. That is what I always think about—the 'Forty-five—whenever I see that old cobbler's map, and then I think of old King George II. Whatever he may have lacked, George did not lack courage. Not he.

People grew very frightened in London as the news of the advancing Highlanders came through. Their early victory at Preston Pans nearly caused a panic. Hundreds of rich people packed up and fled from London!

Even the King was advised to do so. "Pooh!" said he, "don't talk to me that stuff!" and marched out to meet the Highlanders.

He would have fought too, little George; nothing to look at, we know, but full of fight and courage.

You may remember when he was at Dettingen, his horse ran away; it was stopped with difficulty, the King dismounted . . . "I shall not run away," he said. He placed himself at the head of the infantry. He drew his sword and brandished it at the whole of the French army in front of him, and in very bad broken English called out to his men to come on!

George the Second waiting outside London—Prince Charles Edward at Derby, and the road from Ravenspur. . . .

All this I would see again and again in the old cobbler's shop . . . I am sure he knew why I went there!

"What you found this time?" he asked, looking up over his spectacles, stitching away the while. "Another old town?"

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"Lots of them," I answered, "towns that were towns when that old map was printed and now would be little more than villages. Tiny towns that are marked in small letters are now enormous cities."

"Does it give Lichfield?" asked the cobbler.

"Of course it does," said I. "Why?"

"Because my father lived there. I was born there too. Didn't I ever tell you?"

"No," said I.

"Fact, long time ago though."

"You're the second man I've met from Lichfield," said I. "The other was a man who called at my house. Do you remember Lichfield?"

"Left when I was twelve months old," said he, "so can't say I remember much, but I can tell you of a famous man who was born there besides myself."

"Ah!" said I, "I know who you mean . . ."

"You do?" he asked, rather disappointedly, taking off his glasses.

"Doctor Johnson . . ." I began.

"Never heard of him. Who was he? No, I mean Godfrey Witrings the strong-man."

"Oh!" said I.

"Born at Lichfield he was, same as me. Never heard of him?"

"No," I replied. "Who was he?"

"Wait a minute," he said, folding up his glasses and putting them in their case. "Wait a minute and I'll show you."

He climbed off his bench—very slowly, for one leg is much shorter than the other—and taking his stick hobbled off into his house.

A Cobbler

"Here you are," he said, coming back with an old book, with a brown cover—"in here it is."

It was an old book—a very old book with all sorts of towns and places and people in it . . . but he could not find Godfrey Witrings the strong-man of Lichfield.

"Let me look," said I. "Funny old book; will you sell it?"

"What'll you give?"

"Half-a-crown," said I.

"Three bob," said he.

"Right," I agreed.

"Old chap what lived as lodger give it me when he left, with a lot of other rubbish. It ain't worth anything. I tried the book shops. You could have had it for a tanner; still, if you're satisfied . . . I am."

"Quite satisfied," said I, "and I'll give you five bob for the map."

"No you don't," he said, "and I must get on with these shoes."

It was a long time before I came across the name of Godfrey Witrings the strong-man, and when I did I found he was not born at Lichfield at all but at Newcastle-under-Lyme, thirty miles away, but also in Staffordshire.

This is what I read: "Godfrey Witrings a butcher was born at Newcastle-under-Lyme in the seventeenth century. A man of surprising strength, who could lift a wooden form about seven feet long and half a hundred-weight in weight—with his teeth—and strike it against the ceiling, which is computed to be equal to the raising of a hundred and sixty-eight pounds."

That is all I know of the old cobbler's strong-man.

England all the Way

"Found the strong-man of Lichfield?" he asked next time I went in.

"No," said I, "not of Lichfield."

"Found your Doctor Somebody?"

"Yes," said I, "Doctor Johnson his name was. Are you sure your strong-man came from Lichfield?"

"Certain."

"Not Newcastle?" I asked.

"You're getting at me," said the cobbler. "That's where the coals come from."

"Newcastle-under-Lyme," said I, "Staffordshire, not Newcastle-upon-Tyne."

"Do you want to sell that book back to me?" he asked.

"No," said I, "but I'll swop it for your map."

He hit a nail into a boot he was repairing much harder than usual. "No you don't," he said, "and I've got a lot o' work to do."

"Witrings came from Newcastle-under-Lyme," said I, "not Lichfield. Good night!"

He did not answer, and went on with his hammering.

.

So much for the old cobbler. I used to wish I had more worn-out shoes to take him. Now before I end this, and at the risk of wearying you about inn signs, let me first tell you of an inn that I found in that book I bought for three shillings and which I could have had for sixpence. It was called the Legs of Man and Bull. I am quite sure you never heard that before. Neither have you heard, I imagine, of the Legs of Man and Swan, yet both of these inns were standing a hundred years and

A Cobbler

more ago at Prescott, Lancashire. Now what is your explanation?

Perhaps Lord Derby could tell me, for Prescott is the home town of Knowsley Park. Perhaps it is connected with the Isle of Man.

According to the cobbler's book, the cobbler who stuck to his last and let me have the book, "Knowsley Park Mansion was built by the first Earl Derby for the reception of his son-in-law, King Henry VII, on whose head the crown taken from the tyrant Richard III after Bosworth Field was placed by this nobleman, who had been one of the main instruments of Richmond's Victory." And after bearing testimony to the "bravery, magnanimity, loyalty and sufferings" of the Stanleys, it goes on to say that "many of the finest trees lean towards the north-east and are almost stript of their foliage and smaller branches."

That is all my book—once the cobbler's—can tell me. But since we are talking of inn signs, I should just like to mention one that neither you nor I will ever see again—on a new inn I mean.

I do not by this refer to the Woolpack—I have mentioned that elsewhere—but to the Packhorse.

Do you know of one? I can tell you that years and years ago there was a Packhorse on the verge of York. I wonder if it is there now? Packhorses have gone, but there is a Packhorse Inn at Mark in Somerset. I have been told that the Red Lion at Colchester dates back to 1470. Very old inns, too, are the Fighting Cocks at St. Albans (795) and the Old George at Salisbury (1320).

The George at Norton St. Philip, Somerset, dates

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from the fourteenth century and the Fountain at Canterbury from 1029.

I should like nothing better if I had the time and the money than to go about England and write about inn signs. I should like to find out all about the Eagle and Child that stood—or stands yet—at Buxton and the same at Bury, Lancs. The Catherine Wheel at Marshfield, Gloucestershire, and the Bear's Paw at Frodsham, Cheshire, but I am afraid I never shall.

Or if I could not do that I should like to go round England and find out all I could of the history of all the Red Lions, like the Red Lion at Colchester, which I used to know, and where they hung their saddles of mutton and legs of mutton—large ones from Suffolk sheep, not little sheep—out of doors, or rather under a doorway, if I remember right, and if I am wrong about where they used to hang them—I know I can remember how good they were to eat.

Then for White Lions. My favourite of all was the White Lion at Aldeburgh in Suffolk—a stone's throw from the sea—and at Banbury there were both Red and White Lions, and next time you go to Banbury go and look into the courtyard of every inn until you find the most wonderful wistaria you have ever seen; and I hope it is still there, as beautiful as when I saw it that summer of 1921 on the long road to Scotland by Banbury Cross to Lichfield and on to Keswick and Carlisle. No fine lady on any white horse was ever so beautiful as that.

Bath had a White Lion long ago. Beccles had, I know, and it is a town you ought to see now, with many fish in the river. Chester's White Lion has gone, but

A Cobbler

I hope the one at Halifax is still standing and at Kimbolton, Huntingdon, and the one at Malmesbury, that old town of Edward the Elder where so many battles have been fought, I trust it is there still. And Nottingham? There was one at Nottingham as well as at Stockport in Cheshire—so close to Wales—"where the first mills were erected for winding and throwing silk on a plan introduced from Italy, and on the decline of the silk trade these same mills were ingeniously altered to spin cotton instead."

There is no end to White Lions. Another at Whitchurch, Shropshire, to say nothing of all the dozens in Wales!

And Red Lions? I expect there are just as many or more, and you may wonder why I have not mentioned as many Red Lions as White Lions.

Why not name the inns that followed the House of Lancaster as well as the House of York?

Because I want you to look out for them for yourself. I have told you of Colchester—and Pontefract—but I can just mention two more.

One is Lambourn in Berkshire—and to enjoy good ale you should walk all the way from Hungerford as I did, when the nine long miles were all a joy and Christmas but seven days away.

And the other is Somerton in Somerset (worth a long day's walk to see), and there are ever so many more. I cannot remember which was the last I saw or at which Red Lion I stayed last, but I can tell you the first one I ever saw—or remember—it was the Red Lion at Barnet the day I had breakfast with Edward Mortimer. Just to show my impartiality to York and

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Lancaster I called at that inn, as many men and women have before me—on that long road to York: although, as I said, I did but get to Newark . . . Newark-on-Trent.

And now just as I had meant to finish all this I remember the White Lion at Hadleigh, Suffolk; a fine old inn it was when I had tea there—out of an enormous pewter teapot, surely one of the oldest teapots in all Suffolk and well suited for that old house in that quaint old town built ever so long ago on the north side of the River Bret, or as once called Breton, eighteen miles long and joins the Stour.

You must go and see Hadleigh if ever you are that way, and you can remember that here died Guthrum the Danish chieftain—Guthrum the Dane—Danish King of East Anglia whom King Alfred defeated at Edington and who signed the treaty at Wedmore. You may remember that one of the conditions was that Guthrum became a Christian.

Well, here in old Hadleigh he lies buried near the middle of the old town—for that is where the church was built. So the Danes held all the lands east of Watling Street, and there you will find all those places ending in -by, -thorpe, -wick or -wich . . . such a lot of them all over East Anglia and the North.

And the old White Lion of Hadleigh looks down on Guthrum's burial-place, and generations upon generations of stout Suffolk farmers and squires and hardy labourers have drunk their ale at that old inn in peace—all because of King Alfred.

There I had my tea out of the old pewter teapot, and there I wondered how many Red and White Lions there are in England and of which colour there were the most.

CHAPTER XIV

NORMAN CROSS—JOHN OF GAUNT—AND STILTON

THE roads of a country reflect the character of a country only to such an extent as the inhabitants have allowed them to do so.

The road that runs through uninteresting country need not in itself be of no interest.

The road that runs through glorious country may be—as a road—dull indeed.

To-day, alas, all roads are becoming as one road, standardised as to width, colour and—as far as possible—in gradients. It was not always so. Further, the buildings along these modern roads are pathetic in their dreariness or hideous in that commercialism which has raised its hydra-head along the fairest ways of England. Had you put an old traveller down on any stretch of road fifty years ago, "Here," he could have said, "I am in Nottingham, to-morrow I shall be in Lincoln, York is a long way behind. I can tell exactly where I am by the buildings, the bricks or stone of which their houses, walls and bridges are built." And now?

Now we are losing that character which helped to make for each county, the love of county, and which was at once their glory and their pride.

England all the Way

Little red roofs of a Suffolk seaport, stone-built cottages and farms of Gloucestershire, reed-thatched farms of Norfolk and those wonderful Suffolk chimneys of many an old hall and farm.

But even in recent times, if some roads were dreary roads and some roads were dull, there was always a gem of a house or a quaint old village along the road.

Not so very long ago within a few miles of Rushden, a town of ugly houses with factories and hives of many thousand workers at boots and shoes, were some of the most beautiful old thatched cottages round the village churches.

So on this long road from Newark-on-Trent to Grantham and Stamford past Biggleswade and Baldock there were little havens of delight on what would otherwise have been a dreary road.

The old coaching road from London to Carlisle missed Peterborough, Huntingdon and St. Neots.

Huntingdon lay three miles away from Brampton Hut, Peterborough five and three-quarters from Norman Cross, and five from Kate's Cabin Inn.

Norman Cross, or Norman's Cross as it is written on the cobbler's map, was at the division of the road, where the Lincoln road runs off the York road passing through Peterborough and a branch road ran on towards the Wash through Thorney and Crowland.

St. Neots was four and a quarter miles from Tempsford on this York road, and so you see three important places were just off the actual road, yet not very far away.

Norman Cross you may have read about in Borrow's *Lavengro*. You may remember his account of the

Norman Cross

wretched French prisoners there. In 1810 it was. Read again his description of the journey from Peterborough. Here is a little about it:

“Our journey was a singular one. On the second day we reached a marshy or fenny country, which, owing to immense quantities of rain which had lately fallen, was completely submerged. At a large town we got on board a kind of passenger-boat, crowded with people; it had neither sails nor oars, and those were not the days of steam-vessels; it was a treck-shuyt, and was drawn by horses.”

That is how little George Borrow and his mother got to Norman Cross in 1810.

“At the distance of two miles was a large lake, styled in the dialect of the county ‘a mere,’ about whose borders tall reeds were growing in abundance.”

This was Whittlesea mere; in 1786 it measured three and a half to four and a half miles from east to west by two and a half miles wide, but it was drained in 1850-52, and near here Borrow met the old snake-catcher.

If you have not read that account you should do so now, the third and fourth chapters of *Lavengro*; or if you have read it, you should read it again, as I am just going to do.

And now I will confess that from Norman Cross right away to Hatfield I am not very fond of the road.

England all the Way

Each time I have come along it, winter or summer, it has rained.

Perhaps the best time of all, if we could have done so, would have been to come down this road at the very end of the coaching days.

Then the road was full of life, and humanity of every kind thronged the highways.

Came desertion during the progress of the railways and yet the countryside did not change much. Only the road changed.

Even now the actual countryside away from the horrible modern roads is still unspoilt in many places, but you must get away from the road.

Stand on any hill along this road and look around you. Artists, writers, men in every state of life have praised our England and our English scenery.

How they have admired England's chess-board corn-fields and pastures, her checkered fancy coat of gold and green and fallow brown, her red of Devon, with all those hedgerows richly green or tinted with all the red of autumn.

Yet take away those fields, take away those hedgerows and you have England as once she was. Not the England we love and know, but an older England a long long time ago. An England more like parts of France or an England rather like the Isle of Thanet was before men built there so.

For I remember that in the Isle of Thanet were no little patchwork fields but great unenclosed spaces of corn without any hedges. Where the old road ran from the coast towns to Minster were miles of open unenclosed land, yet highly tilled and farmed: arable

John of Gaunt

for the most part. A dreary landscape, unlike England; no hedge, no ditch, no hedgerow trees. Yet once many parts of the country were like that, and we owe our fields and hedges to one Sir A. Fitzherbert. Judge of the Common Pleas, who wrote the first valuable treatise on husbandry in 1539. In this book landlords are advised to give leases to farmers who will surround the farms with fences and divide them by hedges into proper enclosures: by which operation he said, "if an acre of land be worth sixpence before it is enclosed, it will be worth eightpence when it is enclosed." He farmed for forty years before he wrote that book.

So you see we owe a lot of our fields and hedges to old Sir A. Fitzherbert, Judge of the Common Pleas, for his advice was followed all over England.

There are not many places I want to see again upon this road. Between Norman Cross and Barnet there is not much of interest, but I must mention two places; Biggleswade is one. In the cobbler's book it says that the great house belonged to John of Gaunt, who gave it to Roger Burgoyne, ancestor of the present proprietor, by the following laconic grant:

"I, John of Gaunt,
Do give and do grant
Unto Roger Burgoyne,
And the heirs of his loin,
Both Sutton and Porton
Until the world's rotten."

That is what the book says.

The other place I should mention is Stilton, and I should have put this first because Stilton is only three-

England all the Way

quarters of a mile from Norman Cross and Biggleswade is thirty. Biggleswade in Bedfordshire and Stilton in Huntingdonshire.

Stilton, says the old book, "has long been celebrated for the excellence of its cheese, which not infrequently has been called the English Parmesan: it is asserted that this article was first made by a Mrs. Paulet of Wymondham near Melton Mowbray, in Leicestershire, who supplied the celebrated Cooper Thornhill, who kept the Bell Inn in this village, with this new manufacture, which he often sold for two shillings and sixpence per pound; and hence it is said to have received its name from the place of sale. This Thornhill was a famous rider, and is recorded to have won the Cup at Kimbolton with a mare that he accidentally took on the course after a journey of twelve miles."

Thus we come down this famous old road and so to Welwyn and Hatfield—past Hatfield House so famous and on to where this road joins the London-Holyhead road at Hadley—or Monken Hadley. Near here the battle of Barnet was fought—on Gladsmoor Heath, and near the cross roads to mark the spot an obelisk was erected in 1740 by Sir Jeremy Sambrook.

Here is old Barnet town, once a little country town and once very famous for its ancient fair in the first week of September with hundreds of horses and ponies from the mountains of Wales.

So we are back again once more, back through London and all the great North Country lies behind us.

We will say good-bye to the cobbler's map for a while and rest again. It was a long road, an old road, and no road passed over more different kinds of

Stilton

country, for here were fields and hills and level lands and the fen country—all the same to the ancient men who first made that road or to the Romans who improved it. London to York, London to Eboracum, London to Altera Roma, three hundred years of the Sixth Legion and now . . .

The Legions have gone, they too marched down that long road and so to London and the sea, through Gaul to Rome.

CHAPTER XV

ROBINS—GARDENS—AND THE GREAT OLD TROUT

SOUTH again means home again to many weary men. Northern roads seem cold and hard to Wessex folk or to those who come from Devon or from Cornwall.

Hereford and Gloucester are much more like home than the country north of Hertford, whilst Sussex is as kind as the east of Kent is hard. Or is it just a fancy?

Is the wind a little kinder? Are the woods more beautiful? Do the farms in southern valleys give a feeling of happier homes and gentler lives than the bare and treeless houses one sees along that road to Yorkshire and the North?

I think they do, or seem to, but to those who love their homes I know that they are just as dear as ours.

But now we are home again, and here we rest awhile. There's no pleasure like the joy of coming home again after a long journey even if it was but made for pleasure.

To-day it is very sunny and warm for early October, which so often has cold cloudy days before St. Luke's Little Summer.

Robins

The robins have the brightest breasts of red and the sleekest smoothest coats with not a single feather out of place, brighter than I have ever seen them before in all the years that I have been friendly with robins.

It would seem almost as if they were that brilliant colour purposely, to be in keeping with the bright red holly berries, which are brighter and more plentiful this autumn than ever I have known.

So too are all the other berries; the bryony is hanging like glorious coral necklaces all along the hedgerows and every tree is crowded, whether it be apple, nut, hawthorn or the wild rose, whose brilliant scarlet fruit shines brightest of them all.

And although I have not seen them for several years—as they are trees who love the chalk—I hear that down on Kent and Sussex chalk lands the Wayfaring tree is richer with its harvest of delight than for many a long year past.

Beech nuts are so plentiful that the branches droop with all their added weight, and so we wonder as we watch the sunsets—for October's glowing sunsets are the glory of the year—if it is indeed to be that cold cold winter the old country lore foretells.

And if the sunset is so often beautiful and grand, if very wild, in this month of mild nights which differ so little from the temperature of day, then the sunrise is more beautiful still. For on a mild October morning in days before the mist or fog has risen from the land, you will see such sunrising as at no other time.

Here are all the colours that mankind has ever seen, and one day as surely as that sun you wait for will come rising over the hill, you will see a long black cloud:

England all the Way

narrow but very long, which by its very darkness shows up all the other colours as it lies across the sky.

There is glory in every sunrise from the longest to the shortest day, but on some mornings in October they are most glorious of all.

I have remembered, writing of robins as I did just now, that the Night-Watchman told me to say something of robins, and if a further reminder had been needed, this would not have been long delayed, for my own particular robin is on his usual perch close to my window, a flat stone that is built into an old wall with a ledge which affords a good observation post for robins.

The Night-Watchman is fond of robins too, as most men are.

I remember seeing him feeding one with tiny crumbs of bread and cheese.

"Robins," said he, "is fond of cheese."

"He is," I agreed as the robin swallowed piece after piece with evident delight.

"It ain't a he," said the Night-Watchman, "it's a she; that's the cock-robin over there, this one is his missus. Didn't you know as they both had red breasteses?"

"Yes, but I can't tell the difference," I told him.

"I can," he said; "instinct, I reckon."

That was a long time ago; there is a difference, but I cannot describe it any more than he could. I do not believe one man in a hundred could tell. It's always "Cock-robin" with robins, just as it's always "Jenny-wren," but I think robins are the favourite bird of all; even the boys leave robins alone, and in Suffolk they

Robins

used to say. "Where there's a man there's a robin," and it's true too.

There are, I believe, certain people—both men and women—who are known as "Bird-watchers"—people who spend their lives or a great part of their lives in watching or observing birds.

From time to time one reads about them in the papers, and books are published which, I am sure, judging by the reviews, must contain much that is very fascinating to all who study birds.

For the expert these books must hold very much that is of importance; but to the ordinary man the birds they appear to deal with are so rare that they might indeed be about birds in some foreign land.

How many, I wonder, even those of us who have spent all their lives in the country, know the names of all the birds that frequent our gardens, our orchards or our fields?

I for one do not pretend to know. There seem to be so many tiny warblers—fly-catchers and so on—tiny things that are always on the move, jumping from twig to twig, now upright, now upside down, now this side of the tree trunk, now just as you have fixed him with your glasses disappearing altogether—off and away!

I like to see them all, and know them all by sight, but as to knowing their names, that is beyond me. There are so many. So I rest contented with many that I do know—whitethroats, chaffinches, wrens, blackbirds, thrushes, all the common kind, and all the tits, including that merry throng of long-tailed cousins who descend upon my garden every winter for a fleeting

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visit, calling to each other all the time and quite heedless of my presence.

And all the time, all the year, spring, summer, autumn, winter, . . . and in winter most of all, is my oldest favourite of them all . . . Robin!

Talk of bird-watchers indeed! Talk of hours and hours, days and weeks and months and years spent in watching birds, who, I ask you all, has spent such lifetimes, generation after generation, watching *man*, as poor Cock-robin?

From the time that he is old enough to find his own food—soon to be driven out to shift for himself—with his little speckled breast, he sees you with those wonderful eyes as only robins can.

And your own particular full-grown red-breasted robin will stare at you on every possible occasion. When he hears you coming out of doors and sees you in your chair he will appear from nowhere, and as you look up—there he is staring straight at you.

Not for food. Of this I am convinced. True, he will always be clamouring for it when there is a family to feed or days are cold, but over and over again I am sure he only comes for company. Of that I am absolutely certain. If he takes a little food, he leaves more, and is back upon his favourite perch to watch and wait.

And all the time there is method in robin's waiting; from his twig or rock or wall he will come down over and over again, and each time some tiny fly or insect has been taken in his beak.

That wonderful eye can see the slightest movement that tells him where a worm is peeping, and the

Robins

number of tiny flies he will take in the course of half an hour or so must be counted to be believed, also minute beetles and moths and odds and ends.

Even this summer in the very height of the drought from the parched surface of a lawn, brown save where the deep-rooted hop-trefoil gave a welcome patch of green, he found food enough and to spare.

For this I know, I watched him, and one baking August day I counted twenty-nine little "catches" in one short half-hour. Now a tiny brown-backed beetle—the close relation of the wireworm that does so much harm to gardens. There a tiny pale green caterpillar swaying by a tiny thread of gossamer from the oak trees far above. Robin sees them all. You may think he is looking straight ahead, but robin's eyes are right and left and nothing can escape him, from whichever side it comes.

And how he turns his head and neck with one large bold eye pointing skywards or earthwards according to his wishes!

I could believe any number of legends and old stories about robins, but indeed there are but few. There may be more, of course, but the only ones I know are the legend of the Cross and the Babes in the Wood. What a lot of leaves they must have carried to and fro! It seemed impossible to think it could be true when one heard that story in nursery days. Yet robins can carry a surprising amount of leaves in a very short time.

I will tell you of a pair of robins who carried hundreds and hundreds of leaves in a very few days. I cannot say how many, but enough to cover two little

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children anyway. It was like this. In my garden shed was a roll of three-feet wire netting, not rolled tightly as it comes from the maker's but loosely rolled as I rolled it myself. In the middle of this roll was a cavity at least six or seven inches across, and standing on the top of this larger roll was a smaller roll of netting one foot wide.

Although I did not see them at work, that tiny pair of birds filled this cavity up from floor to top with dried leaves. Hundreds and hundreds of leaves were placed as a foundation through that four feet of space, and on the very top was built the nest, and it was not until I picked up the top roll—unaware of the nest—that I saw sitting on her nest a little red-breasted robin who gently rose and slipped through the open door. There were the eggs, and to the eggs she soon came back and hatched out her family in due course.

Now when the time came that they had all flown I took down that netting and took out the dried leaves, and they filled a wheelbarrow: so many were there and so tightly packed at the bottom of the roll were they.

So never again will I believe that two robins could not have covered those children with leaves in that wood in Norfolk—many years ago.

And if it is true, as men say, that the young robins kill off the parents when full grown, then all I can say is that mine have not done so.

The old birds drive away the young, I admit, and there may be a tough struggle for a moment, but I know my cock robin and he has been with me four winters. The one before was with me but three, and

Robins

before that there were two robins who fought at times all through the long cold winter.

Yet old Bill Tranton, an old man who has spent all his life making wooden hoops for barrels, tells me of an old robin that was attacked so fiercely by his young that Tranton would take him home each night in his pocket, and putting him for the night in a cage, bring him back to his shed where he worked each day. And he did this because whilst he was shut up the robin would not eat and would have starved, yet as soon as he was free would eat as boldly as before.

Perhaps the young ones do attack and sometimes kill off the old birds, but I cannot help thinking that many fights we see are against the alien visiting robins that come over each autumn and who are quite rightly looked upon as invaders of territory held by right of conquest through many generations.

And here is a question I want answered—why do robins choose a wet cold day for a bath, and why do they have baths last thing at night and go to sleep all dripping wet?

So here I am contented with my robin and not worrying overmuch about all the other little birds, but always remember that you can't have buds *and* bullfinches!

And if, as I say, those of us who have lived all our lives or nearly all our lives in the country do not know the names of all the tiny birds, it stands to reason that those who only come to settle in the country late in life—on retirement perhaps—can never know them all any better than we do, if as well.

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And my advice to them is to take as much pleasure as they can from watching all these little things but not to bother about them too much.

For this I know, that book in hand a man who had spent nearly fifty years of his life in a smoky northern city was so worried with it all that it spoilt any pleasure he might otherwise have had. The last straw came when he told me that there was a kingfisher that came sometimes to a tiny brook that ran at the end of his garden. He knew it was a kingfisher, he said, by the brightness of its colours and its long beak, and a kingfisher he would have called that bird to this day if it had not chanced to rise and fly away one day when I was there . . . it was a green woodpecker. After that he left his book alone.

It is the same with gardens. People retire and come and live in the country and have a garden for the first time in their lives perhaps. They have never done any gardening before, they may be sixty or even more, yet away they go, working from morning until night. Bending down to the ground here, digging away there, kneeling for an hour or more on a blazing day in July to clip the borders—because someone is coming to tea. Up and cutting and rolling the lawns and weeding, weeding, weeding.

No wonder they look tired and worn out. The garden, instead of being what all gardens should be—a haven of rest and calm delight—becomes an unruly, restive, clamorous child. The very catalogues of seeds and bulbs bring worried brows and heated arguments—ending now and then in tears!

And all for what? In nine cases out of ten to outdo

Gardens

some neighbour's garden. Such gardens hold no peace for me. Trimmiest of trim lawns, paths without a weed . . . but none of the joy of an old-world garden that calls you every summer morning with a smile of love.

I have found more real joy in a rambling, overgrown, weedy old country rectory garden than in all the latest colour schemes and laid-out plans the modern garden enthusiast delights in.

And as with birds so with gardens, beware of too many books.

For the expert it is another matter, but for you who come after weary years at desk in busy town—I say love your gardens and your gardens will love you, but let them not make you their slave . . . for such gardens bring not love at the end, but love of pride, and pride cometh before a fall.

The hand that has held nothing heavier than a pen or a golf club cannot at sixty hoe a long straight line for hours. The back that has but bent to lace the shoes cannot bend and stoop all day. The heart which took you so easily to your car (if you had one) or to the station or the bus, will soon settle the matter once and for all if you make it increase its duties a hundredfold.

Enjoy your gardens whilst you may and be thankful for a chair, a shady tree and poor Cock-robin!

Perhaps Sunday was the only day of the week when you took any exercise when you were in business: now it is the only day you do but little.

You may notice that certain birds only come into your garden on Sundays. For many years a green woodpecker has come almost every Sunday in due

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season to feed on an ants' nest close to my window. He seems to know that it is Sunday, just as the great old trout beneath that bridge, who never rose to any fly the whole week, but spent most of his time idly lying under the arch.

He was a splendid trout and a very cunning old trout. He knew what he was doing, for the moment the church bells started to ring on Sunday mornings, out he would come and rise to any and every fly and take them all.

He knew that it was Sunday, and that no good angler would go fishing on that day because of St. Peter, perhaps, or of Andrew, John and James, fishermen all.

He knew that he was safer than any other trout, because that particular stretch of the river ran through glebe land, and the old parson who had that glebe was a very old parson, who, of course, never fished on Sunday. Besides being a good parson, he was a very good angler as well, and he used to tell this story to many people he met, and the old trout became famous all over that part of Southern England.

So whenever the old trout heard the church bells, ringing as they only ring on Sundays, out he would come from under the old grey bridge, come out boldly, with a leap and a run and a swirl of waters—with a youthful enjoyment quite out of keeping with his undoubted age.

After he had jumped and played and driven off any smaller fish that might have dared to come into his territory he would settle down to take all and every fly that came down the river from above.

The Great Old Trout

For fifty years the old parson had been vicar of that parish, and he maintained—though I do not know if he really meant it—that for fifty years he had been trying to catch that selfsame trout.

As he grew older and found the walk beside the river a little more trying he used to sit down on an old trunk of a fallen tree and think, his rod beside him, of the fifty years he had spent in that tiny village.

He would think of all the old men and all the old women who had gone, and of all the young men and women who were young when he came and who now were very old, like himself.

He would think, too, of the children that had been born, and grown up, and drifted away, and of his wife who had died a long time ago, and of his sons and his daughters now scattered about the world.

Then he always ended by thinking of the old trout under the bridge—just the two of them left.

One day he said to his clerk, "I want you to put on my tombstone, just my name, and then . . . 'For fifty-years,' whatever it may be—'Vicar of this Parish.'"

And the clerk, who was none so young himself, being a matter of seventy or so, said, "I don't like to be thinking about it, but when the time do come, and I be spared, I should like to live just long enough to lay you to rest and to write something else there as well, Sir . . . and then come after you."

"You're but a youngster," said the old parson, "but what is it you would like to write?"

"Just a few words if you don't mind," answered the clerk. "I should like to put . . . 'Vicar of this Parish'

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and then . . . 'a real good parson and a real good fisherman.' "

The parson smiled and said, "No, you can't call me that, not a good fisherman, because I've never caught the old trout, but I should like a fish carved on the stone, because it was one of the earliest signs of the Christian Faith and because of my love of fishing."

The summer came, a long mild showery summer, that mingled in with autumn and went to sleep in November's arms, long past St. Martin's days of quiet peace.

Winter, as if in very chastened mood, kept up the lead of autumn and so spring came once more.

And then came April and the first cuckoo flowers, and then May, so kind and smiling that out came the old parson's rod and he walked beside the river once again.

The ploughman, slowly passing to and fro upon the ten-acre field that overlooks the stream, had seen him going and had waved a greeting.

"A-walking very slowly he were," he said afterwards, "more slower than common and sort of tired-like."

One o'clock came but no parson . . . so they went down the meadows to see if he were resting.

By the old grey bridge they found him, the clerk said he thought at first he was but sleeping, he looked so natural . . . smiling, he said, and in his landing net—still alive—with a tiny March-brown fly still holding—was the great old trout!

They put the fish back into the river (but nobody

The Great Old Trout

has ever seen him again) and they carried the old man back to his old old church.

They carried him back on a hurdle taken out of the hedge just where the shepherd had placed it to stop a gap—with little pieces of wool still clinging to it in places.

They carried him home, over the bridge, along the track the cows made, up the little hill, through the churchyard . . . that was the way they went.

The shepherd in front, as all shepherds should be, and the ploughman behind, very slowly, very quietly . . . with the old church clerk walking beside them . . . and so to the church. Just as he would have liked to have been carried.

And they wrote on his tombstone:

“For fifty-six years Vicar of this Parish.

A very good Parson, and a very good Angler.

Now with God.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE WEALD OF KENT—HOBSON'S CHOICE—"DO YE
NEXTE THYNGE"

TO-DAY is St. Luke's Day, the first day of St. Luke's Little Summer. There has been no sun, but it has been very mild, so mild that there should be a wonderful crop of October toadstools very soon, with all their wonderful colours.

Once when roads were quieter I started off on St. Luke's Day for a journey through the Weald of Kent.

By Goudhurst and Cranbrook and so through many many villages of the Weald all ending in "den" to Tenterden. That day might have been any day in June, but, as I say, there was no sun to-day like there was at the end of that journey, which chanced to be at Canterbury.

Of the journey which I started upon that October day I have written elsewhere, but I will tell you of one or two people I chanced to meet about whom nothing has been written.

The first was a cobbler in a village not so very far from Biddenden, who of all the cobblers that I have ever met was perhaps the most learned.

I sat in his little shop whilst he repaired one of my

The Weald of Kent

shoes which had, probably on account of much rain and too rapid drying, become unstitched.

He told me of St. Crispin and St. Crispinian who were shoemakers and cobblers, and who came from Rome to Soissons in France about the middle of the third century, and who worked at mending shoes at night to support themselves whilst they preached by day. They are the patron saints of all shoemakers and cobblers.

And he told me a story of the Emperor Charles V, who used to mix—without saying who he was—with all classes of his people to find out what they thought of their Emperor. Here is the story, which I have just read again in an old book. One night in Brussels upon St. Crispin's holiday he found that one of his shoes required immediate attention, as even Emperors' shoes may do at times.

He found a cobbler's hut. "What, Friend!" said the cobbler, "do you know no better than to ask one of our craft to work on St. Crispin's Day? Were it Charles himself, I'd not do a stitch for him now; but if you'll come in and drink St. Crispin, do and welcome." The Emperor did so, and "Now, whoever you are," said the cobbler, "drink! Here's Charles the Fifth's health." "Then you love Charles the Fifth?" asked the Emperor. "Love him?" said the cobbler; "I love the long-nosed Emperor well enough, but I should love him better if he taxed us a little less."

Next morning Charles sent for him to be brought to court, thanked him for his hospitality and told him to ask for what he most desired.

The cobbler asked that in future the cobblers of

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Flanders might bear for their arms a boot with the Emperor's crown upon it. To this request Charles agreed, but bade him ask another. "Well," said the cobbler, "pray command that in future the Company of Cobblers shall in all processions take precedence of the Company of Shoemakers."

And so in this little shop in the Weald of Kent I heard an old story of Charles V.

"And where," I asked, "did you hear that tale?"

"From the Reverend," said he. "The Reverend; he's a rare old gentleman for tales, and a great scholar: come here from Devonshire."

"I should like to meet him," said I.

"And so you will," said he, "for here he comes:" he pointed out of the window, and coming across the village street was a tall, slightly built old parson.

"I've just been telling this gentleman of the Emperor and the cobbler," said my companion.

"Indeed, indeed, so you have not forgotten it?"

"A very interesting story," I chimed in. "A cobbler's shop in a tiny village in the Weald of Kent is not the kind of place where one would expect to hear a story of Charles V, but, as a matter of fact, I am afraid I know very little about him."

"Then read about him," said the old parson. "He was Emperor of Germany and was born at Ghent in 1500. A man of great attainments but ambitious, and one who dreamed of a vast Western European Empire with the Pope as its spiritual and Austria as its temporal head. His ambitious schemes were the direct cause of the Thirty Years' War. Read about him."

The Weald of Kent

"Thank you," said I, "one day I will."

My shoe was ready and I picked up my hat and stick and haversack.

"Walking?" he asked.

"Yes," I told him, "on holiday; I am going on to Tenterden and then, keeping north of the Romney Marsh, reach Lympne and Westenhanger. After that I am going right along that almost straight bit of the old Roman Stone Street about fourteen miles or so to Canterbury."

I said good-bye to the cobbler, and the parson and I walked down the village together. He spoke of the Weald, of the Romans, of Canterbury and of St. Augustine.

"There are," he said, "many stories and legends about Saint Augustine, most of which are, needless to say, quite untrue. Take the story about Strood, in Kent, near Rochester. In Augustine's day the inhabitants were supposed to be very wicked people; according to The Golden Legend they refused to listen to him and he was very much annoyed. Have you ever read any of The Golden Legends?"

"No," said I, "none of it."

"Well," he went on, "if you care to read about Strood I can show it to you now; this is my house, come in and rest awhile."

So I went with him into his house and into his study, and he read to me this story about St. Augustine.

I do not pretend to have remembered it all from that day until this, but I have at this moment the same lines in front of me and I will copy them out; the spelling is exactly as printed.

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St. Augustine came to a certain town, inhabited by wicked people, who

“refused hys doctryne and prechyng uterly, and drof hym out of the towne, castyng on hyme the tayles of thornbacks or lyke fysshes; wherefore he besought Almyghty God to shewe hys jugement on them; and God sent to them a shamefull token; for the chyl dren that were born after in the place had tayles, as it is sayd, tyll they had repented them.

It is said comynly that this fyll at Strode in Kente; but blyssed by Gode, at thys daye is no such deformyte.”

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“There,” said the old parson, “that is what old Jacobus de Voragine wrote. Rubbish, of course, but like so much more rubbish it was believed. And now will you join me at lunch? I am all alone, a widower; my sister who lives with me is away; will you share my meal and take pity on a poor old man’s solitude?”

So I stayed and lunched and he told me many tales just as the cobbler had said.

He told me how St. Augustine came to Kent in A.D. 596, and how he was supposed to have brought the first tidings of Christianity to the heathen Anglo-Saxons, although there was already a church to St. Martin outside Canterbury on the road to Margate. He told me a great deal more about Augustine, most of which I have forgotten; and to show how one forgets so much and yet remembers other things, I will tell you of one little incident that arose during our meal.

Hobson's Choice

"You tell me," said he, "that you are going to end this walk at Canterbury, walking all along that old road. I wish I were young enough to come with you, but I am seventy-two. This is the very best time of year for walking, and if I might suggest it, I should be inclined to continue your journey by the Pilgrims' Way, following that old route all the way to Glastonbury. What a glorious walk! You would never have a better holiday."

"I only wish I could," said I, "but it is impossible now as I must be back by the twenty-fifth of this month. I should like to walk the whole way to Glastonbury, but I must go to London instead."

"No alternative?" he asked.

"None," said I. "Someone is doing my work whilst I am away and he will have had quite enough of it by the time I get back."

"Hobson's choice," he smiled.

"Yes," I agreed, "unfortunately."

"I suppose you know the story of Hobson's choice?" he asked presently. "No? Well then, I can have the pleasure of telling you," and he told me the old story of the job-master at Cambridge. "I do not know the origin of that tale," he concluded.

I am telling this now because only a few weeks ago I was reading an old copy of the *Spectator*—written in 1712.

The lines I read were not, of course, in the folio originally published and printed by Mr. Samuel Buckley from his shop the Dolphin in Little Britain in 1712, but in the bound volumes published by "J. and

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R. Tonson in the Strand," MDCCLXV, or fifty-three years afterwards.

Here they are:—

The Spectator.

No. 509. Tuesday, October 14, 1712.

"I shall conclude this discourse with an explanation of a proverb, which by vulgar error is taken and used when a man is reduced to an extremity, whereas the propriety of the maxim is to use it when you would say, there is plenty, but you must make such a choice as not to hurt another who is to come after you.

"Mr. Tobias Hobson, from whom we have the expression, was a very honourable man, for I shall ever call the same so who gets an estate honestly. Mr. Tobias Hobson was a carrier, and being a man of great abilities and invention, and one that saw where there might good profit rise, though the duller men overlooked it; this ingenious man was the first in this island who let out hackney-horses. He lived in Cambridge, and observing that the scholars rid hard, his manner was to keep a large stable of horses, with boots, bridles and whips to furnish the Gentlemen at once, without going from college to college to borrow, as they have done since the death of this worthy man: I say, Mr. Hobson kept a stable of forty good cattle, always ready and fit for travelling; but when a man came for a horse, he was led into the stable, where there was a great choice, but he obliged him to take the horse which stood next to the stable-door; so

Hobson's Choice

that every customer was alike well-served according to his chance, and every horse ridden with the same justice: from whence it became a proverb, when what ought to be your election was forced upon you, to say 'Hobson's Choice.' This memorable man stands drawn in fresco at an inn (which he used) in Bishopsgate-Street, with an hundred pound bag under his arm, with this inscription upon the said bag:

"The fruitful mother of a hundred more.

Whenever tradesmen will try the experiment, and begin the day after you publish this my discourse to treat his customers all alike, and all reasonably and honestly, I will insure him the same success.

'I am, Sir,

'Your loving Friend,

'HEZEKIAH THRIFT.' "

All this, as I say, took place a long time ago, but it comes back to me now. It came back to me because of that old copy of the *Spectator*, and only two or three weeks ago.

A friend who was in Sussex found three little bound volumes of the *Spectator* in an old shop in Uckfield and bought them for me for a few pence, knowing that such old books appeal to me, and one of the first things I chanced upon was that story of "Hobson's Choice."

So in 1935 I read once again much of Sir Richard Steele's wonderful English and marvel at the work not only of Steele but his friend Addison. And as I do so I think of the days of Queen Anne and the coffee-houses

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of London. I remember what I have read of Steele and Addison and of the essays which came into being in those friendly chats over cups of coffee.

Coffee had only come into England at the end of the Civil Wars, but with it came the brightest and easiest conversation which these two men passed on in their writings and left us as a wonderfully rich heritage in print.

So we must always be grateful to the *Spectator* of 17 12, and whilst we remember that Addison wrote two hundred and seventy-four numbers of that paper, indeed all those signed with any of the letters C.L.I.O., I think that our greatest debt of gratitude is due to Richard Steele, the "Captain Steele" who was born in Ireland, lived in England, and who died in Wales.

All this is wandering away from the Weald of Kent, but before I leave the old gentleman with whom I lunched, let me tell you how he asked me if I had had any ale upon my way, and when I said that so far I had not had any ale that day, having decided to wait and enjoy some of the Kentish ale all the better later on, he opened a bottle of Burgundy and he told me that it had been sent to him as a present from an old friend, that it was twelve years old, which he said was just the age this wine should be. He said, too, that it came from the Côte D'or and was full of the sunshine of Burgundy in France. And then he poured out two glasses very carefully, long delicate glasses.

"Six of these go to the bottle," said he, "and as we shall leave some I will take what is left to an old friend, for Burgundy must not be kept until to-morrow.

“Do Ye Nexte Thynges”

“And now, my young friend, I wish you every good fortune and a pleasant journey and bid you remember what old Epictetus wrote: ‘If a man should exceed moderation, the things which give him the greatest delight would become the things which give him the least.’ . . . I suppose you know who Epictetus was?”

“I am afraid I do not,” I answered.

“Well, when you get home again, look him up in a library; you will find that he was the finest of all those old philosophers: he was born about A.D. 50.”

So we sat and talked over our wine. Rather I should say he talked and I listened, for he was a man who could talk on so many interesting subjects yet without tiring one in the least.

And although it may seem impossible to believe that I can remember what he said that day so long ago, yet I have done so, for that is one of the few things with which I have been endowed, namely, the power of remembering little scraps of conversation and trifling incidents down the years from childhood’s days.

Before I left he took me into his garden, he showed me the church tower in the distance (there were oast-houses close by), and he told me that his wife was buried there. “I never worked in Kent, but came here from Devonshire; we came here when the doctors advised this air for my wife’s health, so as I was growing old and had inherited this house from my grandfather, here we settled, but I was never idle.”

Then he showed me his garden and led me to an old stone sundial. “There,” said he, “that will explain what I mean.”

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Carved upon the stone in old English characters were these words:

“DO YE NEXTE THYNGE”

“There,” he said, “a sermon for us all in four words. I have said them over and over again when sad, worried and almost in despair. I wonder where they came from? There are in Mark xiii. 34 these words: ‘To every man his work:’ that is very nearly the same, is it not? ‘Do ye nexte thyng.’ Remember them, won’t you?”

And so I write them now; the sundial may have gone, the old parson has gone, I know, but I have remembered them, and him.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COBBLER'S MAP—KNARESBOROUGH AND THE ISLE OF ELY

AND now we are going to jump right back to Yorkshire, but only for a moment, and I will tell you why. It is because of the cobbler's map.

Never again will he sole another pair of shoes for me because he has gone back to live near Lichfield. It was not long ago that he came hobbling in at my gate, the first time that he had ever been to see me, indeed the only time.

"Hullo!" said I, "fancy you walking so far as this!"

"You never know what you can do till you tries," he answered: "thought as I'd come and see you: those your apples?"

"Yes," said I; "come and have a look at them."

"I've not got much time," he muttered rather irritably; "tidy step here, but they're not too bad."

"Thanks," I remarked.

He laughed. "Here," he said, "cut a long story short; I'm leaving, going home."

"Home?"

"Lichfield."

"But . . ." I began.

"Old uncle of mine, bit lonely, got a little bit of

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money, and he wrote and said I could have his business and live along of him."

"What is his business?" I asked.

"Same as mine," he answered, "but he's comfortable. I've never been my own self here somehow . . . and I'm going. . . . Young George is taking on the shop and I've brought you this."

He began to undo a parcel wrapped in newspapers.

"There!" he said proudly.

"Why, it's the old map!" I exclaimed.

"The old map," he repeated. "Take it, it's yours."

"But I thought you wouldn't sell it?" I said.

"No more I would, and I'm not selling it now. It's yours, take it, you're welcome."

He pressed it upon me, put it into my arms and then held out his hand. "Good-bye," he said. "You'd have missed it, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," I agreed, "I should, and I think it is very kind of you to give it to me."

"Good-bye," he said again. "I'm off, moving back to old Lichfield."

I walked a little way up the road with him. I have never seen him again; but the map hangs on my wall. I never look at it without thinking of the cobbler and of Godfrey Wittings the strong-man of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

One day I think the cobbler will send me a line. I'm sure he will. He left no address, so I cannot write to him. I suppose there must be many cobblers in or around Lichfield.

Sometimes I wish he were here still, although he would go on hammering whilst I was talking, or fill

Knaresborough

his lips with nails and only grunt. George is young and smart and a good cobbler, but . . . well, I miss him somehow, although I have his map.

And so I have been looking at his map again, and the place I was looking for was Knaresborough.

It is marked plainly enough, near Ripley and Harrogate, only Harrogate is spelt "Harrowgate." But Knaresborough was the place I was seeking, and the reason was that someone told me that near Knaresborough was the only, or at least the strongest petrifying "dropping well" in all England. He said that if you place a bird's nest or a mouse or a stick, or anything at all, so that the water drops upon it, that nest or mouse or stick will turn into stone: "and," he said, "old Mother Shipton lived in the cave there."

If only I had known all this when I came through Knaresborough I might have stayed longer, but there it is.

"If only I'd known!" I wonder how often people say that in a year, a lifetime, a generation?

You read that some old friend is dead—see his name in the paper—"Poor old So-and-so!" you say, "no idea he was as old as that. Wish I'd looked in that day I went through Guildford last summer, only I didn't want to stop . . . if only I'd known!" That's the sort of thing I mean.

But old Mother Shipton! When was she born? In 1488, and if you want to know what she looked like, I will tell you; she was not unlike Mr. Punch. I do not suppose that she was in the least like Punch in reality,

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but on the old chap-books that were said to contain her prophecies was a portrait that might be taken for that traditional character.

Nearly all her so-called prophecies were never written by Mother Shipton at all, but were concocted after her death. In 1641, however, a pamphlet was printed which contained many that were said at the time to have been fulfilled.

Her original name was Ursula Southiel, and she married one Tony Shipton when twenty-four years old and departed this life with much serenity at well over seventy.

If you go to Knaresborough they will show you a cave near the river where she was supposed to have lived in the early years of the sixteenth century.

Knaresborough was once a very busy and prosperous town: it was one of the chief centres of the Yorkshire linen industry and both iron and lead ore were worked in the neighbouring hills. That is why it is marked on the cobbler's map. And now I have looked it up in his old book and I read:

“Knaresborough is a neat, well-built, and tolerably large town delightfully situated on the banks of the river Nidd, which flows through a most romantic valley, below precipitous rocks. Owing to a gentle descent of the country for the space of several miles on the eastern side of the town, there are, in that direction, a number of the most extensive and rich prospects, overlooking a great part of the Vale of York, terminated by the bold outline of the moors and wolds; on the

Knaresborough

opposite side the views, though less extensive, and of a different character, are equally beautiful.

"Here are the remains of a castle which was built soon after the Conquest, and was for some time the prison of the unfortunate King Richard II.

"Knaresborough sends two members to Parliament, and has a considerable manufacture of linen.

"Near here is the far-famed Dropping or Petri-fying Well, situated in the long walk on the banks of the Nidd, opposite the ruins of the castle.

"This remarkable spring rises at the foot of a limestone rock, and after running about twenty yards towards the river, spreads itself over the top of another rock, from whence it trickles down in a number of places with a kind of musical tinkling."

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That is what I read, and so if you ever find yourself in Harrogate, which is only some four miles away, you can go and see it for yourself.

In the year 1825 the population was over nine thousand. The last census gave the number as just over five thousand, whilst Harrogate was under two thousand a hundred years ago and is now well over thirty-five thousand.

One day last winter I read what I have just written, and then some time later in a daily paper, I saw:

"A Town of Lost Glory" . . . "Knaresborough's Decline" . . . "From Prosperity to Lichen."

An interesting little article that told of Knaresborough's decline "from the heights of industrial

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prosperity to the depths of antiquarian inactivity." And as I read I recalled those old cobbled streets which must have been just the same two hundred years ago, and the old castle walls above that cliff over the river Nidd. I remembered, too, the old water-mills, one of which was over six hundred years old, and the inn called the Elephant and Castle, which was a famous old posting-house well over a hundred years ago.

All these things then had I been thinking about as I sat over my fire and watched the smoke and sparks from the logs, and as I sat came a ring at the bell, and upon my doorstep was a man with an apron that had once been white and a bowler hat that once upon a time must have had a brim that went the whole way round, and never a dent in it, as this one had in plenty.

In his hand was the seat of a cane chair. . . .

"Any chairs to mend?" he asked. "Cane chairs?" and "You ain't got no dogs about?" he added a little nervously.

"He's shut up," I answered.

"Right!" he said cheerfully. "Some dogs is dangerous. Take postmen now. How many postmen d'you reckon is bitten with dogs every year? You'd never guess."

"I've no idea," I admitted.

"Six thousand," he answered triumphantly. "Six thousand postmen is bitten with dogs every year. Interesting, ain't it? Well, if six thousand postmen is bitten, bitten with dogs as they know, or ought to know, it stands to reason as it's dangerous for a stranger to go nigh some houses. Wot do you think?"

"Very," I agreed. "I shouldn't like it at all."

Knaresborough

"I have picked up some wonderful information in my time," he said placidly: "leastways me and the missus have. Take St. Paul's now—I only heard this a few weeks ago off an old toff that has a house at Barnet. Take St. Paul's. How high d'you reckon it is to the top o' the golden cross?"

"No good guessing," said I.

"Well, it's three hundred and sixty-five feet. That's what the old toff said. 'Where you're standing,' he said, 'on that step with that mark on it is the same height as the top o' the golden cross on St. Paul's,' he says. 'And how far away might that be?' I asked him. 'Matter of about eleven miles,' he said, 'from here to St. Paul's, and when I first came to live here it were green fields pretty nigh all the way—to Highgate Hill anyway.' That's what he said, at Barnet, it was, where they used to have the Horse and Pony Fair first week in September."

"Do they have it now?" I asked.

"Not same as they did," he replied. "I been to it a dozen or more of times, used to sell the first walnuts off the barrows there, I did."

"All sorts of curious things I've picked up on my travels, me and the missus; and talking of golden crosses, there used to be an old pub called the Golden Cross at Charing Cross, London. It may be there now for all I know; not been to London for years. It were called the Golden Cross not because of the cross at Charing Cross—that's a stone one—but because as you stood on the doorstep and looked along past the Strand you could see the golden cross of St. Paul's, way back in the City of London."

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"Yes," he went on, "you learns all sorts of things if you travel about. A rolling stone don't gather no moss, but it gets sort of polished, don't it? You learns a lot travelling."

"I am beginning to find I learn a lot if I stay at home," said I.

"How do you do that?"

"Just talking."

"Talking?"

"Yes."

"Who d'you talk to?"

"Anyone that comes along."

"Anyone what comes along? Is there many comes along?"

"Not so many lately," I told him, "you're the first for some weeks—travellers I mean."

"Well," he said, "what about a job of work? Talking's all very well, but it don't feed yer. I expect you've got a chair wants caning somewhere."

"It's all cane-work now," he continued, "no rushes nor willow. Can't you give us a job?"

Well, I had an old chair that wanted caning, so we came to terms.

"You're a Londoner, aren't you?" I asked, although I was not quite sure about it. Sometimes he seemed to speak pure cockney, at others there was a mixture of dialects and what I thought might be Lancashire.

"Yorkshire," he replied, "but I've lived in London mostly, that is when I weren't travelling about; all over England I've been—every county in England except Cornwall, where they say it's no good going at this line."

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"Why?" I asked.

"Cos they still sticks to horsehair. You won't see a cane chair in all Cornwall, fact! My old Dad he came all through it and only did one chair, and that belonged to a Yorkshireman who'd brought it with him from Ripon."

"So you're a Yorkshireman?" said I.

"I am and I ain't."

"What d'you mean?"

"Like this 'ere. I was born in Yorkshire at Knaresborough . . ."

"Knaresborough!"

"Know it?"

"Not well, but I've seen it and read of it," I told him. "When did you leave Knaresborough?"

"When I was a nipper, but I remembers quite a lot about it. Then we come to London because of the chair-mending, my Dad and I."

"So he was a chair-mender too?"

"He was and he wasn't. Like this it was. He weren't a Yorkshire bloke, home at Ely, if you knows where that is. Isle of Ely—not the Isle of Dogs—Cambridgeshire. Well, he were a real chair-man, no going about from house to house glad of a job now and again, but a regular hand, steady work, own house and garden and all. Then they gives it up."

"Why did he give it up?" I asked.

"'E didn't give it up. The parsons and them give it up. In the Cathedral, they give up using chairs what were seated with willow: so there weren't no more regular work and he went to York."

"Seated with willow, I tell you. Special sort of

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willow—osiers some call them—what they used to seat the chairs with. Before that they used reeds—rushes—then osiers was used for hundreds of years and now it's cane, all cane. That's why he left same as I told yer."

"Never knew they used willow," said I.

"Don't suppose as you did, but it's true, mate."

And now I have just come across a few lines about willows and Ely willows in the cobbler's old book. They were written by old Fuller—old Thomas Fuller, Divine, historian and wit, who was born in 1608. True, it does not say anything about chairs or that these willows were used for chairs, but I do not see why it should not be true. I do not say that what this wandering man told me is true. I only repeat what he told me, and this is what I read:

"A sad tree, whereof such as have lost their love make their mourning garlands: and we know that exiles hung up their harps upon such doleful supporters. The twigs hereof are physick to drive out the folly of children. This tree delighteth in moist places, and is triumphant in the Isle of Ely, where the roots strengthen their banks, and top affords fuell for their fire. It groweth incredibly fast, it being a by-word in this county, that the profit by willows buy the owner a horse before that by other trees will pay for his saddle. Let me add, that if green ashe may burne before a Queen, withered willows may be allowed to burne before a lady."

Isle of Ely

"There," said the chair-mender as he settled down to his work, "that's the kind of work we do now; not what my old Dad used to do in York."

"And why," I asked, "did he go to York?"

"Because of the chairs."

"But why York?"

"Because he heard they was still using osiers in York Minster Cathedral, that's why he went . . . but it's cane now they tell me, all cane."

We settled up for the chair, and he went upon his way down the old lane, his old bowler hat well on the back of his head and the smoke from his pipe rising in little blue clouds above him until he was round the bend.

Now, as I say, I do not know if what he told me is true or not: perhaps if I went into York or Ely I should find that the chairs were not seated with cane at all, but that is what he told me and, in any case, I do not suppose that I shall ever see him again.

But when he had gone, I began to think of Ely and of Hereward the Wake and all the legends of that famous character. And I remembered how I had once come into Ely just before it grew dusk on a September evening all across the level lands.

I remembered passing the old King's School next morning, that school where Edward the Confessor was educated and the massive gateway which dates back to the fourteenth century and is called Ely Porta. Although I believe it was once the entrance to the Abbey, it is now—or was when I saw it—the entrance to the school.

And I remember, too, that as I stood looking at it

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I was impressed by the great south-west tower of the Cathedral which stood out against the September sky. I remember it very well, for I remarked upon it to an old man who was standing close to me, having placed some heavy baskets of vegetables he was carrying upon the pathway whilst he rested.

I told him that I had never seen quite such a wonderfully clear blue sky—of so pale a colour—before, and that although the tower was not dark and black with soot, yet it all stood out so plainly.

And he had answered and said that in September it was very often so. "'Tis the Isle of Ely," he said, "above the wet lands, with the way of the wind and the sea drawing the waters back, that's what clears the skies, young man."

All of which goes to prove that it was a considerable time ago, that he was a man who had observed the ways of clouds and rivers and seas, and that it was a fine morning and he was ready for a talk.

A fine morning, September, and a talkative old man, so that it being warm and his baskets being heavy we went upon our way very slowly until we came to a street which he called "The Gallery," and so to another street—with him talking all the while—and so to a small inn, with trestle tables white with years of scrubbing.

And here in this clean inn we sat and talked over a jug of cool ale, and he told me of all the vegetables that were grown in the Isle of Ely and sent to Cambridge and to London.

I have forgotten the name of the inn, and the surname of the old gentleman has long since gone from my

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memory also, but although it was so long ago, I can remember that the old landlady called him "William," and that she bought some late peas from him which he assured her would be the last he would have "until the cuckoo came again."

I can see him now quite clearly if I think about it. The long cool low-pitched room, the clean tables, the brick floor, a cat, the baskets of vegetables and he and I with our ale.

He told me, too, of St. Audrey, who was really St. Ethelreda, daughter of King Ethelfrida of Saxon times, before Hereward.

First of all they called her Auldrey and then Audrey, and at one time a great fair was held every year at Ely called St. Audrey's Fair, which was on October 17th—St. Ethelreda's Day.

And now, all these years afterwards, I read all about her in an old old book and of St. Audrey's Fair too.

At this fair so I read—"much ordinary but showy lace was usually sold to the country lasses. St. Audrey's lace soon became proverbial, and from that cause '*tawdry*,' a corruption of St. Audrey, was established as a common expression to denote not only lace, but any other part of female dress which was much more gaudy in appearance than warranted by its real quality and value."

I believe this is the actual derivation of "*tawdry*," although many people will not believe it. Places beginning with "Saint"—such as Saint Audrey—are frequently abbreviated just as Saint Osyth in Essex is known locally as "Tosey."

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But there, whether it is or no it does not matter, but, as I say, I remember the old man, William, and most of what he told me: and of that wonderful sky and the old grey tower that stood out so clearly against it I have a memory as if it were but yesterday.

And now to end this I will put what I should have put at the beginning, and that is how one saw the tower of Ely for a long long time before one reached the old city.

Nowadays, in a car, I suppose you would not notice the distance at all, along those level roads; but when you came along on foot, weary with the dreary landscape, it seemed so far away: and mile after mile to draw but little nearer.

Still, all things come to an end at last, even those long roads to Ely, and whatever Ely may be like to-day, it was when last I saw it worth a long day's walk to see, to say nothing of the little inn off the street called "The Gallery," or of old William and all he told me.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRAFALGAR—THE ROAD FROM FALMOUTH—AND TWO LOST DOGS

THERE are to me, and I suppose to some others also, few things that are more fascinating than coming across little items of local tradition that can be proved to belong to the true history of this island.

In that vast jigsaw puzzle which can never be completed, with what satisfaction do we not, after many months or years maybe, at last find a corner where our little fragment will fit snugly into the picture!

So have I to-day just fitted in such a fragment, of no importance truly, but a fragment that I had been trying, as it were, to fit into the great jigsaw puzzle of our history.

It is an old game, a very old game, which will have to be played with patience, but which if continued over many years is not wholly destitute of reward.

How many of us or of those we meet daily at our work or in our leisure ever give a thought to the past?

How many of us recall that it was not so very long ago that all Southern England slept but very lightly for fear of being caught by the foreign legions waiting but

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a score of miles or so across the narrow seas—troops that were waiting under Napoleon for a change of wind and descent upon our shores?

Not so very long ago a man might have said, "I remember the news of Talavera, of Ciudad Rodrigo, of Waterloo."

And Trafalgar?

Only one hundred and thirty years have passed since that battle of October 21st, yet it seems so long ago.

Trafalgar! One hundred and thirty years ago and almost forgotten, yet it has turned up again to-day quite unexpectedly for me. And all because of a chance word or two I had some time ago with a man I know well but whom I do not meet very often.

Last month it was he came to see me, and it so happened that I was looking at that old copy of *The Times* about which I have already written. I mean the one that gave the story of Waterloo.

"This," said I, "is a copy of *The Times* of June 18 15, and it gives the Duke of Wellington's despatch with the news of Waterloo."

"Funny thing that you should have shown me that," said he, "because I have got the one that gives Trafalgar and the death of Nelson. If you'd care to look at it I'll bring it and leave it next time I come by."

Well, when he had gone I remembered that some time before I had read a letter in a daily paper from a correspondent whose father remembered something about the news of this battle, and that I had cut it out and kept it. This is the letter: in the *Daily Telegraph* it was:

Trafalgar

“*News of Trafalgar.*

How it came home.

To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

SIR,

In Capt. J. F. C. Bennett's speech at the dinner of the Westminster Past-Overseers Society, he stated that 'a sloop sailed up the Thames with the news of the victory of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson.'

A story told me by my father some sixty years ago, and afterwards repeated, may be of interest. His father was on the bridge at Staines one evening, talking to the keeper of the toll-gate, when a post-chaise drove up at a furious pace. The driver (probably) demanded the instant opening of the gate, as they were carrying despatches to the Admiralty.

As the post-chaise passed through, an officer, in full uniform, put his head out and shouted: 'There has been a great battle and Lord Nelson's killed.'

My grandfather, a well-known solicitor of Staines, always declared that he and the Staines people heard the news before it reached the Admiralty.

Yours, etc.,

(Signed) E. KEELE HORNE.

Ockham, Surrey."

Now I had wondered at the time why this post-chaise should have come through Staines. That is what

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puzzled me, because I had taken it for granted that the post-chaise had come from Portsmouth, in which case the road would have been by Petersfield, Godalming, Guildford, Ripley, and Kingston to London. No travellers from Portsmouth would have gone any nearer to Staines than Kingston, which was nine good miles away.

So I came to the conclusion that old Mr. Horne the solicitor of Staines who saw that officer must have been wrong about it. To-day I find he was right, because I have been looking at that old copy of *The Times* again. This is what I read:—

“Captain Sykes, of the *Nautilus*, and Lieutenant Lapenotiere, of the *Pickle* Schooner, arrived at the Admiralty together about half-past one o’clock yesterday morning. The former did not, as was generally understood, arrive from the scene of action; he fell in by accident with the *Pickle* Schooner, and on learning the intelligence proceeded immediately to Lisbon with the information, from whence he was sent with despatches, by Mr. Gambrier, the British Consul, to England, and landed at Plymouth. Lieutenant Lapenotiere made the Port of Falmouth, and, by a singular coincidence, met Captain Sykes at the gates of the Admiralty.”

So you see old Mr. Horne was right, because Lieutenant Lapenotiere had come from Falmouth, Cornwall.

From Falmouth he would have travelled about two hundred and sixty-seven miles by Penryn, Truro,

The Road from Falmouth

Bodmin, Exeter, Bridport, Blandford, Salisbury, Andover, Basingstoke and Staines, then over Hounslow Heath to London.

And because of this old copy of *The Times* I can perhaps add a little to that letter and to what Mr. E. Keele Horne tells us. I can say with a certain amount of probability that the officer Mr. Horne saw was Lieutenant Lapenotiere of the *Pickle* Schooner and that he arrived at the Admiralty at about half-past one o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, November 6, 1805.

From Staines to London is sixteen miles, and why he took so long to reach Whitehall I do not know. We can make a guess, however. According to Mr. Horne, he saw the post-chaise in the evening. Well, we know from Admiral Collingwood that "on the 22nd October, in the morning, a strong southerly wind blew, with squally weather," and that "it continued boisterous for several days." Such stormy weather, especially with a southerly wind at that season of the year, is invariably followed by calm, sunshine, and then fog. A London fog, perhaps, was hanging all round London along the Valley of the Thames by Staines and Brentford.

The floods may have been out, the roads were heavy. Impatient as they were, anxious as they must have been to arrive with such vital news, post-chaises and post-boys had, perhaps, to slacken down for a real old "London Particular."

But this is mere guess-work, all we know is that the news of Trafalgar came home to the Admiralty by Lieutenant Lapenotiere of the *Pickle* Schooner and by Captain Sykes at the same moment. Captain Sykes

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from Plymouth and Lieutenant Lapenotiere from Falmouth.

Both of these officers could have come through Staines, so which did Mr. Horne see? Why have I decided that it was Lieutenant Lapenotiere? Because Lieutenant Lapenotiere was the younger of the two and in spite of that longer journey, some fifty miles longer, would be more likely to call out the news to a stranger: as he had no doubt done at intervals all the way from Falmouth.

And here, no doubt, I had better end, but before I do so I must say that I have Mr. E. Keele Horne's permission to reprint his letter to the *Daily Telegraph*. I wrote to him and he kindly replied and said: "... my father (born in 1824) had many stories about Nelson, but unfortunately I have but a dim recollection of them now."

There is, too, one other point of interest in all this, and that is the name of Lapenotiere. Surely it is proof of that wonderful mingling of all European races in the English nation that the very man chosen by Admiral Collingwood to carry this despatch should be a Lapenotiere, a name that is undoubtedly French in origin.

Lapenotiere is probably of Huguenot descent, although I cannot find it in a list of Huguenot refugees: still that counts for nothing, there were many other lists. The greatest number arrived in 1685 after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. Many of them joined our Navy and Army and no doubt were thoroughly English by 1805, long before that.

Two Lost Dogs

Still, I like to think that some little French characteristics continue, in fact I am sure they do, in all of them to this day.

And it is for that reason perhaps that I add one more argument in favour of Lieutenant Lapenotiere having been in the post-chaise at Staines, because I cannot help thinking that a man with French blood, however distant, would be more communicative than, say, Captain Sykes, for, good old English name as it is, it is Yorkshire, and that is a county whose sons are not so talkative as those who have even a very distant claim to France. The derivation of the actual name of Lapenotiere is unknown to me; probably it was originally La Penotiere and became Lapenotiere, just as D'Arcy has become Darcy and D'Arnell, Darnell.

Thus I found a little history—just a tiny fragment—on the road from Falmouth to London.

The old paper, the old copy of *The Times*, number 6572 of Thursday, November 7, 1805, is even more frayed, and a little more yellow than my copy about Waterloo, and as I put it away, very carefully, for my friend to call for it, my eyes fell upon an advertisement.

“*Ten Pounds Reward.* Strayed or stolen, a King Charles spaniel, Brown and White, broad blue ribbon round its neck—Answers to the name of ‘Charlie.’

The above reward will be paid upon restitution of the same to J. S., Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. No further reward will be offered.”

A favourite and petted darling this, the blue ribbon

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tells us that, and "Charlie" is a name we do not often hear for dogs to-day.

But what is it that appears familiar about the advertisement? Why, the address, of course. I have just recalled it, for it was the address given my Mr. Squeers . . . "Mr. Squeers is in town, and attends daily, from one till four, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill."

I read this over again, and although I had read through all there was to read I had not noticed that there was another advertisement for a lost dog; a poor old friend, this one:

"Lost, an old Pointer Dog, White, with red spots, answers to the name of Basto; almost blind. One eye quite gone.

Any person bringing the said Dog to No. 15b, Swallow Street, Piccadilly, shall receive one guinea reward, and reasonable expenses paid.

N.B.—No greater reward will be offered."

I hope both of them were found, but of the two I can't help hoping most that the poor old dog, almost blind, one eye quite gone, found his way home again that November night after the Battle of Trafalgar.

CHAPTER XIX

THE KNIFE-GRINDER—STOW-ON-THE-WOLD—AND THE LEARNED CHEMIST OF GLOUCESTER

I AM always highly delighted when, amongst the many changes which have taken place since man invented machines for rapid transport, I discover from time to time some relic of an age that has now gone for good.

With the discovery of steam as a motive power, to be followed some hundred years later by the more mobile motor-car, many older forms of travel were at first very slowly and later very speedily driven from our roads.

With these, too, went that long journey from house to house, farm to farm and cottage to cottage. The journeys took but a fraction of the time, the calls became more frequent.

Yet with this increasing frequency the visit was shortened, not prolonged. The pedlar and the pack-horse may have made much fewer calls but they stayed longer, for they would not pass that way again for many months.

So with their passing passed much of the romance of the by-roads.

Along these roads and tracks and paths passed many

England all the Way

men who, although they did not work as others might, yet managed to pick up some sort of a living from those who did and who dwelt upon these quiet ways.

Even to-day one still comes across men who seem to make just enough to live upon although they appear to do no regular work at all.

Several such are known to me, and although they might be described broadly as belonging to the working classes, do, so far as I can tell, but little work at all. There is the knife-grinder for one. True he pushes his old machine over miles of country roads, which must of necessity entail a considerable amount of work, but I have yet to see him actually in motion.

A few years ago I used to come across his machine standing outside a garden gate, but except when he comes to my house I have never seen him walking or working.

"Old" machine, I said advisedly, because it must be the oldest one upon the roads to-day, indeed it would not surprise me to hear that this old machine saw the last stage-coach go rattling on towards London.

I remember the first day he called this summer.

"The old machine has seen its best days," said I.

"Old?" he answered at once, "it ain't old, brand-new it were three years ago: wants a coat of paint, that's all it wants, and paint costs money."

"But the wheels," I went on, for they were very old and warped, and the old rubber tyres were tied on with odds and ends of wire and string and even with pieces of cloth.

"New three years ago," he said emphatically.

"That machine was made years before there were

The Knife-Grinder

rubber tyres," I continued; "and is that your name—Hopkinson?"

For this name was painted in crude lettering on the side and front.

"That's it," he answered shortly. "Got any scissors or knives to grind?"

A dark man, pleasant, cheery and by no means bad-looking, with Gipsy written all over him.

"Hopkinson?" I repeated, "Hopkinson? What part of the country do you come from?"

"Surrey," said he. "Joined up for the War at Kingston. The sergeant knew me. 'What regiment would you like to join?' says he. 'Artillery,' says I. 'Right!' says he, and takes down all particulars, age and name, married or single, number o' children and all that. 'You're old,' he says, 'but you can have the last place as is left seeing as I knows you, Lee,' he says."

"Lee?" I put in.

"Lee," replied the knife-grinder, "that's my name."

"And Hopkinson?" I asked.

He set the wheel in motion and turned the knife I had given him this way and that.

"Like to see sparks?" he asked, smiling, as he ground away. "No, it's a new machine," he said presently, "or very nearly new, anyway."

"Was it the one you had when you joined up?" I asked. "The one you used before the War?"

"That's right. The very same," he replied absently.

"Twenty years ago!" said I as if to myself; "a long time ago."

"That's right," he said again, "a long time."

"Was it old then?" I asked.

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"What?"

"The machine," said I.

"Brand-new, but might have wanted a coat of paint."

I gave him what he asked and he went down towards the gate, walking very slowly. "Well, best of luck to you," he smiled; "may you live long and die happy."

Some months later came another man, same old machine, same old name. A tall thin man this time.

"That your name?" I asked, "Hopkinson?"

"That's right," said he.

"Funny thing," I told him; "chap came along a month or two ago with the same machine, said it was his, same name and all."

He hesitated. "Fat dark bloke?" he asked, "laughing sort o' bloke?"

"That's him," I agreed.

"My brother-in-law, name o' Lee."

"He said he was Hopkinson," said I.

"No, it weren't and it ain't mine neither: that's the name on the old bus. We borrows it from the Magpie."

"The Magpie?"

"Yes, the Magpie, the lodging-house, tanner a day for the hire of it."

"I see," said I; "so you're all Hopkinsons at this job; goes with the machine, eh?"

"That's right," said he. "Got any scissors or knives to grind?"

I don't know how they manage to live, they are not regular knife-grinders, not specialists I mean, my knife

Stow-on-the-Wold

could tell you that. Here to-day or for a week and then they move on. But some are always with us. There is old Joe: he does not work much but he is always busy. Blackberries, mushrooms, primroses, mosses from the wet places, flowering grasses, everything in its season, and never without a pipe to hold and tobacco to put in it.

The last time he called was just before the hopping.

"You'd better come along wi' me," he said; "do you a power o' good, fresh air, sleep on the green grass, plenty of good grub, good drink, and no work on Sundays. Why don't yer?"

"Where are you going?" I asked. "Paddock Wood?"

"No," said he. "Kent, that's where I mostly goes to."

"But Paddock Wood is in Kent," I told him.

"Kent," he repeated, "that's where I'm going. I mostly goes to Kent. So you ain't coming?"

"Can't get away," I answered.

"Pity; it'd do you a power of good," said he.

There are local men or men who know the district well, but sometimes you have a call from a complete stranger.

Only a week ago came a man selling knives and scissors, not pretending to sharpen them; good ones too, Sheffield made.

"Are you a local man?" I asked.

"No," he said, "my home's at Portsmouth."

"A long way to come," I remarked.

"Circular ticket," he answered. "This is the last week, see,"—he dived into a pocket and brought it out,

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—"cost me twenty-five bob. Here's all the places you can go to: Hastings, Bexhill, Winchelsea, Rye, Polegate, Eastbourne, Chichester, dozens and dozens of 'em, and Arundel. Ever been to Arundel?"

"Yes, long time ago though."

"Pretty place."

"Fine," I agreed; "at least it is round about. So your home is at Portsmouth?"

"Not my home."

"I thought you said you lived there?"

"So I do, but my home is a long way away, that is my real home. You'd never guess. I don't suppose you've ever heard of it" . . . he smiled.

A pleasant, decent type of man, not a countryman, I should have thought, more like a mechanic.

"Where is it?" I asked.

"Stow-on-the-Wold," he replied. "Gloucestershire; ever heard of it? I wouldn't mind betting as I'm the first man you've ever met here from Stow-on-the-Wold."

"You're quite right," said I, "but I have heard of it, and what is more, I have been there."

"You have?"

"Yes," said I, "and had dinner there once, at the Talbot."

He laughed. "Wish I'd been with you."

"But," I went on, "I should not have put you down as a countryman, not Gloucestershire, anyway."

"Ah," he said, "that's because I've been to sea. I was at sea fifteen years . . . five and ten."

"Five and ten?" I repeated.

"Five in the Royal Navy and ten in the Merchant

Stow-on-the-Wold

Service. Well, you've been to Stow-on-the-Wold; what is it that Stow hasn't got?"

"No idea what you mean," said I.

"Well, you know what the elements are, don't you? Earth—Water—Fire—Air? Well, Stow-on-the-Wold has only got one, and too much of that. It's got no earth—only stone. It's got no fire as there's no wood and no coal, and no water, but air it's got and plenty."

"Why no water?" I asked.

"Well, it has now; but in my grandfather's days there was only rain-water and water from one old well at the end, the north end of the place, that was pumped up with a windmill. Different to most windmills it was, as it didn't stand up like they do this way, but was what they call horizontal. This windmill raised water from the deepest well in all Gloucestershire, into a tank, and from there it went into pipes to all the houses what could pay for it. All stone-built they were too. Stone, all stone and no coal."

"If there had been coal," said I, "it might have grown into another Sheffield where your knives come from; and the air is too good at Stow-on-the-Wold to spoil with smoke."

"You can't live on air," said he, "and I can't live without selling a knife. What about this one? Or this pair of nail-scissors. Try them. Go on, that's all right, take it. No, wait a bit though, to-day's Friday; don't never cut your nails on a Friday, unlucky. Try this knife."

So I bought a knife, and a very good little knife it has proved to be, and the man from Stow-on-the-Wold went upon his way.

England all the Way

Stow-on-the-Wold! I had almost forgotten there was such a place.

Stow-on-the-Wold! Years have passed since last I stood upon that part of the old Fosse Way: the last time my feet trod this old road was where it crosses Mendip in Somerset.

Stow-on-the-Wold is about fifty-two miles from Bath and it is one of the few places in England that have more than three words in its name.

Yet here are three others at least: for Stow is three and a half miles north-east of Bourton-on-the-Water and four miles south-west of Moreton-in-the-Marsh. Whilst four and a half miles north-west of Stow-on-the-Wold is Bourton-on-the-Hill.

You may remember that right away down Mendip way is a village called Stretton-on-the-Fosse, and here forty miles or more from Bath you will find Foss Bridge and Foss Cross, all because of this old Fosse Way.

And as I think of Foss Bridge and the Coln I remember the river Windrush that this road crosses close to where the old turnpike gate stood in coaching days, and of a man I once met on this bridge.

I was on my way back to Stow-on-the-Wold, or rather to the railway station to get to Gloucester, and having several hours to spare, stood upon this bridge and looked down upon the waters of Windrush which in due course would join the Thames on the borders of Berkshire.

And as I stood there that day in early June I was joined by a man who also was for the railway and for Gloucester.

The Learned Chemist of Gloucester

And such is my good fortune upon the road, and always has been since I first met wandering men and gipsies, tinkers and knife-grinders, I came upon one of the most interesting men I have ever met.

People have told me that I always write about old men, and there is truth in it, and the reason is because it is from old men that one learns such things as are of interest about old England. Your young men think—and rightly—of the future. They think of what they are going to do, not for them the past. It would be a bad day for our country if they did not look ahead.

But old men, real old men, the aged grandfathers in the chimney corner, have no visions of the future. They do not wish to think of an England that will change more than it has changed already.

But the past? That is different, and nearly all old men are ready and willing to talk of days when they were young, and when alone they dream dreams of the past. Well, this stranger that I met upon that bridge over the Windrush was an old man, and what is more he came from a very old city.

Do you remember Miss Beatrix Potter's *The Tailor of Gloucester*? That fascinating little book which so many of us read so long ago? Well, that was the city my new friend came from; but he was not a tailor, he told me, he was a chemist. If he had told me that he was one of the ancient Alchemists of the Middle Ages I should not have disputed it. He was old, he was grey, and he was a very learned man.

He had retired, of course, and took days away from Gloucester and wandered all about that lovely county.

"Gloucestershire," he told me, "is divided into

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three distinct parts: the Hills, the Forest and the Vales. The Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean and the Vales of Gloucester and Berkeley." And he went on to tell me how he travelled all about amongst the outlying and unfrequented ways and found out old customs and old villages and old names.

I was younger then and perhaps did not pay as much attention to all he said as now I know I should, but much of what he said I still remember.

"Show me your map," he said, when I had told him I had an ordnance map, "and I will point out to you places with curious names the meanings of which are now forgotten."

So I unfolded my map and he pointed to a certain spot and said, "That is called Starveacre; do you know why?"

"No," I told him, "but I have come across the name in the south or west of England and thought it meant poor land, good-for-nothing land."

"And so it might," he agreed, "others have thought so also. Thomas Hardy thought so. In his *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* he says: 'Tis a starve-acre place. Corn and swedes are all they grow.' Well, he's wrong, doubly wrong. First, corn and swedes won't grow on poor soil, or only very badly, and secondly, starve-acre does not mean that at all. You know the beautiful flowers called Delphiniums, and the annual Larkspur? Well, one particular kind of that plant was grown in England in order to obtain from its seeds a very powerful extract, called Delphine to-day. It was used by the ancient Druids and so on, and by the Romans, and was called Staphis Agria, Stavesacre, and finally

The Learned Chemist of Gloucester

'Starveacre.' The correct name is Delphinium Staphisagria. I maintain that these fields called 'Starveacre' are places where these plants were grown, and not because of the poverty of the soil. They would only grow in certain localities."

"It all sounds very interesting," said I, "but I am afraid it's too good to be true."

"You don't believe me?" he asked. "Well, well, I'm not sure that I believe it myself, 'not proven,' as they say in Scotland. Let's try again. Here now, 'Trendle' . . . what does that mean?"

"No idea at all," I answered.

"This is quite common," he said at once. "You will find this in many places. You will find it in old records; in old Churchwardens' accounts you will find items referring to 'trendles.' A trendle was also known as a 'corona' and was the circular metal holder of wax candles, a candlestick, in fact. In those old days they hung them before the Altars. Well, to provide funds to pay for these candles certain enclosures of land were let on lease and the rents went to pay for these candles. The enclosures of land were known as 'Trendles' and the leases as 'Trendle Leases.' There is no guesswork about that, and you will find fields called trendles in many parts of England."

Now of all the many things he told me I only mention these, but, right or wrong, he was a most entertaining old fellow and I travelled on to Gloucester with him. Of chess and the history of the game he talked incessantly, yet all I can remember is that he told me Caxton printed the first book on Chess in

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England, and that it was the first book printed from metal types and was called "The Game and the Playe of Chesse."

So we came to Gloucester and he begged me to come and have supper with him, and I did so, in a delightful old house in a quiet corner of Gloucester.

And I remember with pleasure how I was welcomed by the dear old lady who was his wife and how I fell in love with her old-fashioned charm. And although the years have flown I never hear or see the name of Gloucester without happy memories of that old couple.

Of how he brought out his chessmen and of how he played with me, leading me on into traps and then after flattering me with the hope of victory allowed himself to win but by the barest margin, I could tell many tales, whilst he sat and smoked his old pipe and we drank the good coffee his wife made for us in that ancient city on the Avon.

I have passed the evening in many kinds of houses, large and small, but none more pleasantly than that within a short distance of the old Cathedral with those old and friendly souls.

CHAPTER XX

OLD GLOUCESTERSHIRE—ISABEL'S ELM—JOHN TAME OF FAIRFORD

OF the Forest of Dean no doubt many books have been written. What a splendid forest it must have been before it was all cut down in Charles I's reign, as the old chemist told me. Still, it has been planted again, very much of it, and more than half was always kept to supply timber for the old Navy.

Thirty-four square miles of forest with coal, iron and quarries. Of the ancient rights and customs of the miners he told me and of their parliament or Speech House.

So interesting was it all that I took his advice and after leaving Gloucester went by train to Ross-on-Wye and thence to a spot called Symonds' Yat, a great hill overlooking this valley of the Wye, said to be named after an old giant called Symonds who guarded this gateway into Wales, *yat* and *gate* being the same word.

Not far from the hill a forester pointed out a deep ravine towards Monmouth where the waters ran in a mighty rapid, and which is called "The Slaughter" to this day because here was once a great slaughter of the Danes who had sailed up so far as this in their long boats from Chepstow down below.

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And he told me, too, that the waters ran red with blood, as I have heard in other places connected with old battles.

Then he, being a peaceful man, went on to talk of the most peaceful of all occupations, that of fishing. He told me of the salmon that once in this river were free to all who dwelt upon its banks, but now are preserved by the Crown, and of the grayling which were plentiful in this rapid called "The Slaughter," and which are at their best in winter though the water is so cold for wading.

So I wandered on and across this forest and came to many beautiful places and many very much devastated by the hands of man in search of coal, and so to a place called Mitcheldean near Newland.

But before I did so and some five miles or so away, a man gathering dry boughs that had been lopped from the trees, to which he assured me all foresters had the right for fuel, being known as "loppings and toppings," pointed out a near-by hillside.

"See that hill?" he asked. "See that spot above that patch of bright green where the spring has fed the grass? See they rocks?"

"I can," said I.

"Well," he answered, "therein lies gold."

"Gold?"

"Gold, but they don't work it now; in the rocks it is."

I looked at my watch, there was no time to spare if I was to catch that train at Mitcheldean Road Station near the village called the Lea and old Lea Bailey hill.

Old Gloucestershire

"Could I find any?" I asked.

"No," said he, "too deep."

So I left the goldfields of Gloucestershire and in due course the train took me back to Gloucester.

I have often thought about that gold. Thousands and thousands of pounds' worth have been taken from the gold-mines of Wales, and there is gold in Cornwall, so why not in the Forest of Dean on the very borders of Wales?

And if I am not mistaken the next station was called Longhope, a name that seemed to be just what a name should be for the little place I saw from the train on the way to Gloucester. Hills and valleys and orchards and a summer evening.

Longhope. And now after many years as I sit a hundred miles away, perhaps, the name has brought back memories of many peaceful scenes. I think of quiet villages and clear streams, of old castles and of those times that were not quiet. Of the raids along the Welsh Marches, of sword and fire, of the Lords of the Marches, who were given large estates on the Welsh borders on condition that they defended England with their men-at-arms.

Then I come back to the peaceful fields near Lechlade where the river Coln finds its way into the Thames, all the way from near Cheltenham on the Cotswolds.

Once again I see the New Inn at Lechlade and wonder when it was really new, for it was a posting house a hundred and fifty years ago at any rate.

Of twenty miles of England and of Gloucestershire fields this river Coln has tales to tell the Thames, and you can be sure there are stories of Fairford and of the

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trout that live and die there and of the Bull where anglers meet.

Whoever thinks of Gloucestershire, too, must think of Windrush and of Avon—Avon that rises close to old Tetbury, perhaps the oldest town in Gloucestershire (where the two tired roads tried to trot to), and many lovely old farms, old manors and old houses where men have lived long and died in peace.

I have just read of two old parsons, two very old parsons who lived in Gloucestershire a long time ago.

One was the Rev. John Elliott, Vicar of Randwick for seventy-two years (1819–1891) and who lived to be a hundred years old.

The other was the Rev. Potter Cole, who for seventy-three years was Vicar of Hawkesbury, Gloucestershire, and who died in 1802 aged ninety-seven.

Can any other county beat that? I wonder. "For seventy-two years Vicar of this parish," and "For seventy-three years Vicar of this parish."

Just think of it. To be Vicar from four years after Waterloo until four years after Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and in the same county to find another who was a vicar from 1729, two years after the death of George I, until 1802, three years before Trafalgar. Such was old Gloucestershire. Hills, forest, vales, fields, woods, streams and meadows, old houses, orchards in blossom and the wild daffodils which give a golden glory to many a Gloucestershire field may still be found.

England has larger counties but in only one I know is there more varied charm than in this Western shire

Isabel's Elm

that can claim the Severn and the Wye and which is surrounded by Monmouth, Hereford, Worcester, Warwick, Oxford, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Somerset.

And writing of four of these counties, Oxford, Gloucester, Warwick and Worcester, reminds me of an ancient stone called Four Shire Stone which stood where these four counties met at a spot on the London—Worcester road, one mile and three-quarters from Moreton-in-the-Marsh.

I wonder if it is there still? Near the spot was once fought a great battle between the Danes and Saxons, for here Edmund Ironside defeated Canute the Dane.

And talking of battles, three miles from Tewkesbury is a name that sounds strangely peaceful after memories of that dreadful fight. It is Isabel's Elm. I wonder why it was so called, and who this Isabel was? Could it have been poor little Isabel daughter of Charles VI of France who was married to Richard II in 1396 when she was only eight?

I am not sure what became of her after King Richard's death in 1399, but I remember that Sir John Froissart says that the King of France was so upset about affairs in England that he sent Lord D'Albreth to interview King Henry IV and inquire into the situation.

The little Queen, then only seventeen years old, was at that time living at Havering Atte Bower in the Forest of Hainault near Romford in Essex.

No, I do not suppose that it was her elm, but it is unusual to have a woman's name for any English place.

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Little Ann and Abbot's Ann in Hampshire are so called from the river Ann which has nothing to do with the Christian name of Ann at all.

Of churches and their architecture one can read in the many guide books, and Gloucestershire, like Somerset, has many splendid old churches, but in my old cobbler's book I have just read something of Fairford Church that is of interest: "This Church," it states, "was erected at the sole expense of a merchant named John Tame, who purchased the manor of Henry VII, he having taken a vessel laden with painted glass, bound from a Flemish port to Italy, determined on erecting an edifice expressly for its reception; and it was accordingly disposed of in the decorations of twenty-eight of the windows of this church. The subjects are principally Scripture and history, and the execution so fine, that Vandyck is recorded to have declared they could not have been exceeded by the best pencil."

I wish I had known this when last I was at Fairford, for I did not go inside this old fifteenth-century church.

I suppose that old John Tame was one of those old Merchant Adventurers of Bristol. You will observe that he did not buy this glass, "he having taken a vessel laden."

I must admit I like the words "he having taken a vessel laden." No nonsense about old John Tame, merchant of Bristol, a stout son of Gloucester no doubt, for Bristol is partly in Gloucester. He must have flourished in those days when every merchant

John Caine of Fairford

vessel that left Bristol was heavily armed and ready to fight any ship she met and take a prize.

But Gloucestershire is, as I have said, a peaceful county once one can escape from Bristol and the coal-fields.

In tiny villages old customs lingered even when they had gone from many other country districts.

One ancient one that lingered on for a long time, and may still be remembered by the old, was that of making bonfires on Midsummer Eve. Great bonfires were lighted out in the fields, and on Twelfth Night they would light twelve little bonfires on some high hill, and one large one. And people who are learned in these things have said that they dated back to the days of the Druids.

But of all the things I carried away with me from Gloucestershire, both things of the mind and material things, the one I like best of all was a stick.

No ordinary stick this, some three feet long or so, but a stick of at least five feet six inches made from blackthorn that was cut from the Forest of Dean. This stick is very straight, and with a little V-shaped space at the top, made by leaving an inch or two of small branches, for a man to put his thumb into whilst he grasped the stick with his fingers just below. So prized were they that a really good one of real blackthorn, straight and seasoned, was worth a pound. They were shod with a strong iron point that would hold the ground on the rocky paths.

Should you ever go to that part of Gloucestershire adjoining Herefordshire and Monmouth, say at

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Symonds' Yat, and climb up the great hill to the Yat rock you will be glad of such a stick.

Should you cross the river Wye by the ferry and, stepping into Herefordshire, climb up the great hill called the Doward you will know what I mean and can realise how useful it would be in winter when the snow lies, or at night-time at any time of year.

For all over these hills are many steep and narrow paths where such a stick as this will save the traveller many a fall.

I still have that stick and never see it without thinking of those old hills and of the kind friend who gave it me beside the river Wye.

With it too go memories of such bluebells as I have never seen elsewhere, bluebells that grow on Doward hill (wild hyacinths I mean), and of the first snowdrops that grew along the riverside but a hundred yards or so away in the County of Monmouth, as you follow the river down below the rapids on the Doward side, with daffodils in plenty.

Near this spot, below the rapids, were formerly some iron-works, and the whole of this old hill has been mined in days gone by. Here you will find old workings, old adits, and ancient caves.

And should the day be clear, climb up to the highest point above the Yat, to the Yat rock itself, and there you will see parts of eight different counties: Hereford, Monmouth, Shropshire, Worcester, Gloucestershire, Glamorgan, Brecon and Radnor.

CHAPTER XXI

TWO MIGHTY OAKS—DANIEL DEFOE—SHEFFIELD PARK, SUSSEX

GLOUCESTER, Somerset, Bristol and the Indies. Hawkins and Cabot, stories of the Spanish Main, Willoughby and Chancellor, the frozen seas of the Lapland coast, America and the Merchant Venturers, tobacco and sugar, spices from Jamaica . . . all these are of old Bristol.

Stout ships and good men to man them. Ships made of oak from the Forest of Dean and even so far away as Sussex, all came to Bristol.

Sussex oak was taken to Bristol by sea, and if the greatest quantity went to Chatham it was because Chatham was nearer and only in the neighbouring county of Kent.

And of all the oak that was used by shipbuilders in those days, men say they preferred the oak from Sussex to that from Hampshire or the West and North.

It must be remembered that there are different kinds of oak trees; those that grow most commonly in Sussex are called stalkless-leaved oaks because the leaves seem to grow directly or almost directly from the twigs, while the acorns are borne on long stalks. In

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the other kind the leaves have stalks and the acorns have not.

It was the stalkless-leaved variety that grew and still grow most in Sussex, and it was this particular kind which was most prized for ships, as the builders said it was the most durable. Many have been the arguments, the quarrels and the discussions amongst those old shipbuilders, both in England and in France, as to which was the best.

Some said one thing, some the other, and all the time they kept on building ships. In Hampshire there was and is still a third variety called the Durmast oak, and some old shipwrights, such as those who build mighty vessels along the coast of Hampshire, would only employ these oaks from the New Forest.

"It stands to reason," they said, "that Durmast oak must be the best of all. 'Tis harder and stands the weather better, and for why? Because the leaves stand longer on the trees in winter, and if it weren't strong enough for that, then it would be no better than the other two."

Right or wrong, this is a fact about the leaves, for this Durmast oak has leaves which are a little different from either of the others in that their under surface is covered with a fine down.

Well, whichever was really the best I do not know; but I do know that nearly all the Forest of Dean oaks were of the variety with stalked leaves. The Durmast oak of the New Forest has stalkless leaves like those of Sussex and the only difference is the downy under surface.

So you see it was not entirely a question of English

Two Mighty Oaks

oak, but of particular varieties of oak, just as there were later to be particular varieties of steel.

So as one thinks of all this and recalls old oaks and old ships and battles at sea from the Armada to Trafalgar, one naturally thinks of fields and woods and forests and the oak trees of England.

And as I do so, I remember those two mighty oaks I spoke of in the first chapter that once grew in Sussex, in Sheffield Park in that county.

Sheffield Park is one of the oldest parks in all England. It belonged in the days of Edward the Confessor to Earl Godwin, and after the Conquest Duke William gave it to his half-brother the Earl of Montaigne. Various Dukes and Lords held it down to the time of the Delawarres, when it was sold by them in 1769 to John Baker Holroyd, who in 1780 was made a peer as Lord Sheffield or Baron Sheffield.

I know nothing about that Mr. Holroyd, where he made his money, why he was made a Baron or whence he came, but I do know he was not a Sussex man. The name is, I think, a Lancashire or Yorkshire one. When I say I know nothing of Holroyd, I might possibly add that all I do know of him is that he was a great friend of Gibbon the historian, who stayed at Sheffield Park.

In any case this has nothing to do with the oak trees at all, nor might you think that Daniel Defoe, the famous author of *Robinson Crusoe*, would have any connection with old oaks, and Sussex oaks at that. Yet in a way he has.

Perhaps you have never read his book *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, by Daniel Defoe,

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Gent., published in 1726. If not I should strongly advise you to do so; it was the father of all road books, every road book published since then has been copied from Defoe. And because when I began to think about those two old oaks in Sheffield Park I began to think about something I had once read in old Defoe's book, I looked up what he had written and will copy it out now:

"I left Tunbridge, for the same Reason that I give, why others should leave it, when they are in my Condition; namely, that I found my Money almost gone; and tho' I had Bills of Credit to supply myself in the Course of my intended Journey; yet I had none there; so I came away, or as they call it there, I retir'd; and came to Lewes, through the deepest, dirtiest, but many ways the Richest, and most Profitable Country in all that Part of England. The Timber I saw here was prodigious, as well in quantity as in bigness, and seem'd in some Places to be suffer'd to grow, only because it was so far off any Navigation, that it was not worth cutting down and carrying away; in dry Summers, indeed, a great deal is carry'd away to Maidstone, and other Places on the Med-way; and sometimes I have seen one Tree on a Carriage, which they call here a Tug, drawn by Two and Twenty Oxen, and even then, 'tis carry'd so little a way, and then thrown down, and left for other Tugs to take up and carry on, that sometimes 'tis Two or Three Year before it gets to Chatham; for if once the Rains come in, it stirs no more that Year, and sometimes a whole

Sheffield Park, Sussex

Summer is not dry enough to make the Roads passable: Here I had a sight, which indeed I never saw in any other Part of England: Namely, that going to Church at a Country Village, not far from Lewis, I saw an Ancient Lady, and a Lady of very good Quality, I assure you, drawn to Church in her Coach with Six Oxen: nor was it done in Frolick or Humour, but meer Necessity, the Way being so stiff and deep that no Horses could go in it."

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That is what the author of *Robinson Crusoe* wrote in 1724, and it is of interest because I want you to compare it with this that I have copied from another old book:

"Lord Sheffield's estate, the gardens of which alone contain upwards of one hundred acres, is situated nearly in the centre of the Weald, and is the most extensive in that tract of country.

"The soil of this part of the country is remarkably favourable to the growth of timber. Gough relates that in 1771, two oak trees in Sheffield Park, whose tops were quite decayed, sold standing, at the risk of their being unsound, for £69. They contained upwards of 23 loads, or 1140 feet of square timber. The carriage of them to the water-side, only nine miles, upon a good turnpike road, cost £30; each tree being drawn by 24 horses on a low carriage made for the purpose and travelling only four miles and a half a day.

"They were floated from Landport, near

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Lewes, to Newhaven, where they were with difficulty embarked, for the use of the navy at Chatham."

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So there you have two separate accounts of Sussex timber, Sussex oak for the Royal Navy.

Sheffield Park lies between Lindfield and Fletching and the river Ouse runs through it. The Ouse in those days was capable of carrying barges from Lindfield and could easily have carried these two trees to Newhaven so far as depth was concerned. Why did they not go by water? I think the answer to this will be found in the length of the trees. All down this river were locks, notably one just by Fletching, by Carver's Weir, and I think the trees must have been too long for the passage of the locks, which were but little longer than the barges.

If this was not the reason, then they must have grown somewhere in the park where it was so swampy in between the trees and the river that they could not reach the water, but again I do not know.

And now before I leave Sheffield Park, I want to mention an old country rhyme which is very very old, a prophetic one, as indeed so many of such rhymes were:

"When Sheffield Park is ploughed and sown,
Then Little England, Hold thine Own!"

I do not know the date of this, and what is more I do not know whether or not any of Sheffield Park was ploughed and sown with corn during the Great War, as so much ancient grass land was; but if it were so,

Sheffield Park, Sussex

and if some of that ancient pasture dating back to days before the Conquest was ploughed and sown, it was assuredly at a time when little England had cause and had indeed to "Hold thine Own."

Neither do I know who lives at Sheffield Park now or I would write and ask, but I do know that when last I saw it the old Sussex Ouse was quietly moving very slowly towards Lewes and the sea, all was calm and peaceful and it had changed but very little since the days I fished for trout near Carver's Weir and by the Sloop Inn, when you and I were younger and all seemed well with the world.

CHAPTER XXII

AN OLD BARN—THE *SANTA DE ELMANAR*—THE
SPANISH ARMADA

IN a quiet country between the hills and the sea there passes an English river that I love; so old is this river that it has changed its course many times since first there were rivers in this island.

By quiet meadows and here and there a wood through which it wanders, slowly, calmly, with hardly a rush or swirl of waters, but reaching at long last the saltness of the tide that comes upwards from the sea.

Up this river long ago came men speaking a strange tongue, fierce men armed and eager for all that is wrong, all that is hateful to peace.

Down this river in later times went barges with the hay and corn of the countryside, and down it too went great beams of oak cut by many a water-mill that this same old river worked. You may read of them in Domesday, all these mills, and what they were worth in the days just past the Conquest.

All round the highest reaches of this river were many many woods, woods that joined at last the great forests of the Weald and from which went those mighty oaks which were at once the pride and strength of England.

Along its banks, too, lie many old farms, some with roofs of stone and some with roofs of deep red tiles

An Old Barn

now nearly brown, and all are lichen-covered, whilst here and there a roof of thatch still covers the old house as it did so long ago.

And of all these farms I think of one I know where a gentle slope raises the floors of kitchen and of dairy well above the risk of winter's floods, whilst beyond continues into a higher hill that shuts off the colder winds and gives good cheer to orchards.

Old walls, old barns and old trees, walnut and apple, damson, and even mulberry, stand leaning this way and that, but mostly a little eastward where the strong west wind has bent them.

Here you will find all those old kinds of apples—Winter Queening, Norfolk Beefing, Russets, Golden Pippins, Golden Rennets and Nonpareils.

And the house itself? Well, though it is of this I should like to now be writing, I must pass it by and come first of all to the great barn that stands with two massive walls of red brick and two longer sides of oak and elm just beyond the dairy wall.

This barn is high and with two great doors on either side of the longest walls of wood, great doors that were built to give free passing to wagon loaded up with sheaves of oats or wheat just carried from the harvest.

Stand inside the old barn with your back to the great doors you enter by and look across; there you will see a strong beam that lies across the top of the opposite door, which is just as wide but not so high.

No wagon with its load of harvest corn could pass beneath that beam, for that is why it is there, and the reason for its placing was to prevent the wagons

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from passing straight on and out when they came into this barn at harvest, if the horses did not stop.

Here the farmer's men unloaded their wagon and stacked the sheaves away around them, to stay until some later cold and wet mornings, when the flails came out and the sound of men threshing as they used to thresh woke up the sleeping cats and made them stand all eager and ready for families of mice or rats that fled this way and that as their nesting-places were roughly disturbed by the workers in the barn.

And now as you stand inside the barn and look above and around, you will see many massive timbers. Long beams, wide beams, heavy beams; beams that are cunningly fitted into others, and some that are straight, and shorter ones that are curved which support the lofty rafters, whilst running the whole length of the barn is one of amazing length, square and strong and true.

Here and there are edges roughly bevelled, and if you look more closely you will find many holes or cavities cut out of the sides. Some are a foot long or even more, with a width of six or eight inches, more or less, according to their former usage.

For these were not new timbers when the barn was built, they were from old ships that had ploughed the seas for many years before they came home to rest above this quiet river.

Old ships' timbers and a smell of salt, old oak beams and a scent of malt that seems to cling to them from the years and years of brewing that used to take place in the smaller brick-built brew-house adjoining, whose old brick chimney comes up beside the house.

An Old Barn

"So this is where they used to keep the corn?" I asked the farmer.

"That's it," said he; "unload it in the old barn and let the horses or maybe bullocks—for they had many bullocks in them days—trample it down, tread it down nice and solid so as they could get the more within it."

"All oak?" I asked.

"Oak mostly, but see them side bits up atween the rafters; them's willow, sally-willow; lasts pretty nigh so long as oak if it's kept dry, and lighter for the lifting."

"And the outside?"

"Oak and elm. Oak in the middle and elm above and below where it gets most water. All the oak inside's mostly from old ships' timbers; travelled more miles than you nor me, I lay, and seen more foreign parts—at least more than what I have."

"I wonder what ship it came from?" said I. "How old do you think this barn is?"

"Same as the house I reckon, and the date of that was 1604. It's over the front door; ain't you seen it before?"

"Never," I told him; "come and show me now."

"What about my pigs?" he smiled good-naturedly; "they don't want nothing, do they? I got nothing to do, I suppose, like some people what's always busy!"

He put down his buckets and "Come on, then; there 'tis 1604, and you never seed that before? And now I'll tell you something what my old grandfather told me. You know the old well field just below where the old lock stood against the river?"

"Yes, I do," said I.

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"Well, you know that sort of square ditch with the reeds and rushes growing in it?"

"Yes," said I again.

"Well, in that there used to stand a house, tidy-sized one too, by the looks of things; some of these bricks and some of these stones and timbers come out o' that old house. When that were pulled down in grandfather's time they used some of it for patching up this, and the old chap told me as lots o' the old timbers had a name cut deep into them, name o' some old foreign ship; he told us the name."

"Do you remember the name?" I asked.

"No," he said slowly, "but Tom does, he's got it wrote down in the back o' the old Bible."

"Where is he?" I asked.

"Bringing in the cows; now you'd best go and waste some of his time, but not much, mind, for I can't milk cows and they mayn't be kept waiting. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said I, and to cut a long story short, as he would say, I found Tom, and Tom didn't know exactly how it was spelt but he called it Santa Delmanar, and when at last I saw it written it was Santa de Elmanar.

"I reckon," said Tom, "as what it means be Salamander wrote foreign; what do you think?"

"It certainly sounds like it," I agreed, "but I wonder why it was cut in at all, on timbers. What became of all the rest?"

"Dunno," said Tom, "leastways not exactly—'twere sold to builders; but an old bloke who come nosing round one summer-time told us as they used to

The Santa de Elmanar

cut the name on some of the great timbers so that case they got shipwrecked and come floating home they'd know in them days as they'd gone below, the men I means, because they'd got no wireless nor nothing."

"I see," said I.

And so that evening I came slowly across those old meadows thinking of that old Spanish ship the *Santa de Elmanar*. Where was she built? What battles did she fight in? The Armada perhaps? I do not know. I have no list of the hundred and thirty-two ships of the King of Spain that came so boldly in that great broad crescent past Plymouth, those ships which had been sighted from the Lizard that 19th day of July, 1588, when the beacons flared their warning all the long way round the coast. Was the *Santa de Elmanar* amongst them? Again I do not know. I have a list of all the English ships that fought with Nelson at Trafalgar, both the Van and the Rear. I know all the eighteen of the Van, from *Victory*, *Temeraire* and *Neptune*, to *Naiad*, *Pickle* Schooner, *Entreprenante* Cutter; and all the fifteen of the Rear, from *Royal Sovereign*, *Mars*, *Belleisle*, to *Defiance*, *Prince*, and *Dreadnought*, but I do not know those ships of the King of Spain.

You who are in London maybe can read their names at the British Museum, in the Record Office, or wherever such things are to be found; and should you do so it is possible that in that list might be the *Santa de Elmanar*! I should like to know.

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I bear no enmity against them now, but who that is English and has a drop of West Country or South Country blood in his or her veins can think of that great sea-fight without a thrill?

All wars are cursed wars, but this was no war in any common sense. And what it proved? It proved the worth of Englishmen.

Dr. Allen, then late of Oxford and later of Douay, had told the King of Spain that all the Catholic Earls and Lords of England would rise to help the Spanish. He sent him a list. Of that list every Earl and Lord stood for England when the hour struck.

The greatest of them all, Cumberland, Oxford, Northumberland, brought their own vessels to fight side by side with Drake and Lord Howard before the Spanish fleet had passed Plymouth.

Squires and wealthy merchants vied with each other to be the first to put to sea in their own little craft for a scrap with the Dons. Not a Catholic stood back, it was England first and every man for England.

So whenever I see old ships' timbers I think of that old barn and that old Spanish ship and then of those peaceful fields beside my old river. And sometimes as I do so I think of a silver coin that was dug up by a man in his garden a year or two ago at Lindfield in Sussex.

It had two heads upon it, Queen Mary of England and King Philip of Spain.

A shilling of 1554, which year a special coin was struck and upon which was engraved:

The Spanish Armada

“Philip and Mary, by the Grace of God, King and Queen of England, France, Naples, Princes of the Spains;”

and on the reverse:

“Posuimus Deum Adjutorem Nostrum,”

which means, I think—“We have made God our Helper.” . . .

That is what the old coin said.

And as I am writing of inscriptions now I will quote one that was engraved on a special medal struck to commemorate the great victory. It read:

“The Lord sent His wind, and scattered them.”

So the reeds and rushes still grow in the old moat that once surrounded an old English home that was built with timbers from the *Santa de Elmanar*, and as the winds come howling over the meadows and great black clouds come rolling over those old hills from the south-west, I remember these words of old Francis Drake:

“Never anything pleased me better,” he wrote, “than seeing the enemy fly with a southerly wind to the northwards. Have a good eye to the Prince of Parma, for, with the grace of God, I doubt not ere it be long so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia, as he shall wish himself at St. Mary Port among his orange trees.”

CHAPTER XXIII

TENTERDEN STEEPLE—THE GIRLS OF WINCHELSEA AND RYE—YEOMEN OF KENT

EVERYBODY knows the old rhyme about Candlemas Day, so there is no need to write it here, but this year it has come true, for snow is lying on the hills and even in the valleys.

Candlemas Day was so mild, so warm, that it tempted an aged man who should have known better to leave the shelter of the workhouse, some ten miles from my home. He turned his back to the gates that day and paid no heed to any old rhyme.

The birds were singing, he told me, the sun was shining and he felt younger. If he had listened to old stories and old rhymes he would have stayed where he was.

I do not know how old that rhyme is but have just come across these lines in Latin:

“Si sol splendescat Mariâ purificante
Major erit glacies post festum quan fuit ante.”

That is very old. Probably the same old story could be traced back to Celtic times, but at any rate they knew all about it, whilst in 1676 in the *Country Almanac* appears:

Centerden Steeple

"Foul weather is no news;
hail, rain, and snow
Are now expected, and
esteem'd no woe;
Nay, 'tis an omen bad,
the Yeomen say,
If Phœbus shows his face
the second day."

Well, if old Billy Blew (for that is his name) had known all this, as of course he should have done, I should not have seen him yesterday.

Let me say at once that he is rather a querulous old man, and not without cause is he peevish, for he has suffered a good deal. Well over seventy, one eye quite gone, and his feet are very tender.

The eye went from an accident years ago, but he can see very well with the other one.

Last time he came was just before the October rains, when he looked in to tell me he was going back to the workhouse.

Snowing it was, yesterday, and five days from Candlemas, when the bell rang.

"Why, Billy," said I, "what are you doing here?"

"Come out Monday," he said.

"Are you going back?" I asked.

"Not if I can help it," he said determinedly.

"How are you going to live?"

"Work," said he.

"Work?" said I. "You can't work even if there was any work for you to do. Didn't you tell me you had the pension now?"

"So I have," he answered, "but they keeps that

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inside; so long as you're in there they has it for your keep."

"Well, so that's why you came out, so as you could spend it how you liked?"

"I shan't get any before Saturday," he said, "that's why I came to see you, if you could help me a trifle. I'm going to lie at old Jackson's, in his barn, to-night, but just a trifle for food would help me."

He stood there with his long stick and his one eye, and I noticed little short pieces of straw clinging to his coat.

"Where did you lie last night?"

"Down in an old stable."

"Who is at Jackson's now?"

"Same as usual: Hoppy Miller, Happy Hood, old Gooden, Tom Baker and Black Harry."

"Anyone else?" I asked.

"Not sleeping, only comes daytimes."

"How's old Jackson?"

"He's all right."

"Are you going back to the Union to-night or staying at Jackson's?"

"Jackson's if you can help me a trifle, as I told you."

"And what do you do there for your keep?"

"Little wood-cutting."

"And the others?"

"They all does a bit, not much any of 'em, specially old Gooden."

"Can't make out why he keeps them," said I.

"There's no bounds," said Billy.

But it's true. Somewhere a mile or so away is a

Tenterden Steeple

man I will call Jackson; he has a tiny farm and does some other work.

In his barns and shed are usually to be found some half-dozen or more old men according to the time of year. Some of them have been there for years. They do just as much or as little as they like, they have a roof and food, and as long as they behave themselves and do a little work, a shilling or two to spend.

Some do practically nothing, but old Jackson lets them stay. He is by no means well off, indeed far from it, but there it is. That's his charity. I have never heard of him turning anyone—any old man that is—away so long as he is reasonably well-behaved. I know very well that he would be better off without them, but there they are.

"My father might have lived a long time if he hadn't been so particular about his clothes," one of the old men at Jackson's told me once.

"How?" I asked.

"Accident," he said, "but he were too particular, when he broke his leg he would have them change all his clothes and put on his best suit afore he went to hospital, or he might be alive now. Got there an hour too late. Appearances," he went on slowly, "appearances, some thinks too much and some too little. Take my old dad, might be alive now almost, same as I say."

"How old are you?" I inquired.

"Seventy-five."

"He'd have been an old man," said I. "Where did he come from?"

"Tenterden," he answered; "that's why he were so particular about his clothes. All the people from

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Tenterden, Cranbrook, Goudhurst and Hawkhurst was wonderful particular about their clothes, so dad told."

So these words have brought me back to Kent again and I am wondering if there is any foundation for this statement: "All the people from Tenterden, Cranbrook, Goudhurst and Hawkhurst was wonderful particular about their clothes."

I should like to know why. Tenterden is to my certain knowledge more famous for its lofty spire than anything else.

When I was writing of these villages of the Weald I did not mention the Steeple, so will tell you what the old Parson told me the day I had my shoe mended by the cobbler of Kent.

"The church," he said, "was formerly part of the Monastery of St. Augustine and belonged to that great community of monks. The steeple, the highest in Kent, has a legend attached to it. Did you know that it was the cause of the Goodwin Sands where so many ships are lost?"

"No," said I, "how did it happen?"

"Well," he went on, "here is the story. If you look at old maps of England just before the Conquest you will see an island called Lomea off the coast of Kent. That island was marked on Roman maps as *Insula Infera*. It was a low-lying but very fertile island, some fifteen miles by seven, and belonged to Earl Godwin. After the Conquest, William took this land from Godwin's son and gave it to the Augustine monks of Tenterden.

"The Abbot, instead of spending money on keeping

The Girls of Winchelsea and Rye

up the sea walls, used it to build Tenterden steeple, and in the year 1099 the waves rushed in through the dilapidated sea walls and the whole island was flooded. This steeple is almost fifteen miles from Hastings, you will see it as you go by Tenterden to-day. And here's another thing. There is an old legend that a very rich young squire, a landowner of Tenterden, said that there was not a girl in Tenterden or in all the Weald of Kent who was pretty enough for him to marry. He had heard that the girls of Winchelsea and Rye were much prettier, possibly on account of the many French families who had settled there, I do not know, and he gave out that he was going to ride to Winchelsea and Rye and see all the girls and find a wife there. The story goes on to relate how he got to Rolvenden and met a very pretty girl who asked him where he was going. He told her the reason for his journey, and the end of it all was he married this girl instead and brought her back to Tenterden. Oh, and I've left something out—stupid of me, most important—the story tells that when he set out all the girls in Tenterden climbed the steeple to see which way he went! But I think he must have dodged them, or hoped to do so, because, as I said, he went by way of Rolvenden, which is not the quickest way to Winchelsea or Rye. My grandfather on my mother's side was a man of Kent, lived at Goudhurst, and he told me this story when I was a boy."

I can see his old eyes twinkling as he told me that story, and then he asked me if I were going to Winchelsea and Rye, and if I were, to be sure to go by Rolvenden where, he said, I too might find a wife!

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And as it happened I did go by Rolvenden next day, but nobody asked me where I was bound for, and no pretty girl did I meet.

Indeed, there were no girls at all, save one at a small cottage near Rolvenden who stuttered so that whatever she said was quite unintelligible to me, and another at an inn upon the road who was busy cooking. To this day I do not know whether she was cross-eyed or whether she was trying to keep one eye on her cooking and the other on me, to be quite sure that I did not help myself to anything in the little parlour. So I decided to go on and see Winchelsea and Rye another time, and my road lying northwards came at last to a place where I had tea at an inn called, I think, the Walnut Tree at Aldington, and here I wrote some verses about the old story, which I have just routed out again and put them in now for better or for worse!

TENTERDEN IN KENT

Long years ago when Time was Space,
And people thought it no disgrace
To travel fifteen miles a day
In a calm and quiet way,

At Tenterden there lived a man,
A Man of Kent, was he;
He looked across the Weald of Kent
To the Town of Winchelsea.

He said, "I'll ride to Winchelsea,
To Winchelsea near Rye;
I'll find a wife in Winchelsea,
Or anyway I'll try!"

The Girls of Winchelsea and Rye

And all the girls in Tenterden,
At Tenterden in Kent,
They tried to climb the Steeple
To see the way he went.

They saw him from the Steeple,
They saw him riding by,
To fetch a wife from Winchelsea,
From Winchelsea or Rye.

He met a maid at Rolvenden,
At Rolvenden in Kent;
She really was a pretty maid,
She asked him where he went.

He said, "I'm off to Winchelsea,
To see them all go by,
All the girls from Winchelsea,
And all the girls from Rye."

"And do you think," she shyly said,
"They'll be as nice as I,
All these girls from Winchelsea,
And all these girls from Rye?"

He kissed the maid from Rolvenden,
He kissed her all the way,
He took her back to Tenterden,
I've heard Grandfather say.

He took her back to Tenterden,
To Tenterden in Kent;
They did not ride the shortest way,
But anyway, they went.

He never left the Kentish Weald
To see them all go by,
All the girls from Winchelsea,
And all the girls from Rye.

So on across this pleasant land by old villages

England all the Way

woods and little rivers, and hills that grew in number and in size as I left the marsh below me and Sussex lay behind. And so at length came to the old Roman road that ran from Lympne to Canterbury and there joins Watling Street, the greatest road of all, that ran from Dover to Carlisle.

And so into an inn in rather a bleak country, the third one I had looked at and which lay some little way off this road. A farmer who gave me a lift first told me to try it and ended by driving me there, and there I stayed two days.

Here I heard stories of Men of Kent and Kentish Men, and of an inn called the Man of Kent that stands somewhere in an open wind-swept country on the road from Rye to Tenterden (I think they said).

And there was much talk of Men of Kent and no little about Sussex, for there were two Sussex men staying there who were woodmen, and they argued with the men of Kent.

There was a Sussex farmer also, and so there were three Sussex men to hold out for their county.

And I told them of the man from Tenterden and how he sought the girls of Winchelsea and Rye, and one of the Kent men said that Sussex girls and Sussex pigs had the longest legs in all England, because their feet would get stuck in the Sussex clay, and generations of pulling and straining had lengthened them so that they were longer than any others.

And a Sussex man said, "That may be so, but girls of Kent have the biggest feet because only those with the biggest feet can stand at all, the others had all

Yeomen of Kent

sunk in the mud of the Romney Marsh and were all drowned."

And they told me if I thought of getting married—it was, I say, a long time ago—not to marry a girl from the Weald of Kent, as they were for ever a-sweeping and a-shaking mats so that a man got no rest in his own home. At which I was glad that I had only seen those two girls, of whom one stuttered and the other had eyes which, as I say, appeared to be at cross purposes.

"But this," as Defoe says, "is digression," and I have just read a few lines in the cobbler's book about Tenterden and Cranbrook which may throw some light on the tradition that the inhabitants of Tenterden, Cranbrook, Goudhurst and Hawkhurst "was wonderful particular about their clothes."

You may remember that the old man who told me this was seventy-five, and so his father must have been born a long while ago and had this tradition handed down to him. But handed down from whom?

Well, this is what I read:

"*Cranbrook*. This neat town was formerly the centre of the Clothing trade which was originally started and carried on by the men of the Weald of Kent in and around this town and in the villages of Tenterden and Goudhurst and many more. It was introduced into Kent by the laws of Edward III, who persuaded a number of Flemings to settle in the Weald of Kent in the tenth year of his reign and to whom he gave the

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most liberal encouragement. There is no such trade carried on in these parts at this day. The houses are neat, well kept and the people industrious. There is a writing school for the poor children of the parish and a free grammar school for all poor persons' children."

So you see it may have been a tradition that all those who worked in the clothing trade as it was carried on from Edward III's reign felt themselves in duty bound to be "wonderful particular about their clothes."

Cranbrook was the centre of the broadcloth trade for centuries, and traditions die hard, especially in the Weald of Kent, and Cranbrook, the little town upon the river Crane, has a proud tradition to maintain.

And because of these chance words from this old man whose father was so particular about his clothes because he came from that part, so particular, in fact, that it may have cost him his life, I have looked up these villages of the Weald of Kent in old Defoe's *Tour* also.

This is what he wrote in 1724-26:—

" . . . At Cranbrook, Tenterden, Goudhurst, and other Villages thereabout, which are also in the Neighbourhood of this Part, on the other side the Medway, there was once a very considerable Cloathing Trade carry'd on, and the Yeomen of Kent, of which so much has been fam'd, were generally the Inhabitants on that side, and were much enrich'd by that Clothing Trade; but that

Yeomen of Kent

Trade is now quite decay'd, and scarce Ten Clothiers left in all the County.

"These Clothiers and Farmers, and the remains of them, upon the General Elections of Members of Parliament for the County, show themselves still there, being ordinarily 1400 or 1500 Freeholders brought from this side of the County; and who for the plainness of their appearance are call'd the Gray Coats of Kent; but are so considerable, that who ever they Vote for is always sure to carry it, and therefore the Gentlemen are very careful to preserve their Interest among them."

So now we know that in Defoe's time, although there were some ten clothiers, most had gone since King Edward III in 1337 or so.

Still, 1726 to 1810, when the old man's father was born, is not so very long, and the poor old chap may have been the last descendant of those old Flemings. As to Defoe's account about the plainness of their appearance, well, after all, to be plainly dressed does not mean poorly dressed, or untidily dressed. Look at the old Quakers, they were plainly dressed enough, but who, I ask you, ever saw a Quaker in rags or indeed any member of that Society of Friends who was untidily attired?

And to end all this I am sorry to say I never asked the old man his name and I never saw him again. Whether it was that of a Fleming or not I do not know, but you will find very many names in England that came from Flanders long ago.

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And in all the parts of England where Flemings settled to work the wool, such as the Weald of Kent, you will find old Flemish names if you will seek out old records.

Cranbrook was one of the most noted of all these places and there is to this day an ancient house there called the Old Cloth Hall. Perhaps you may have seen it, but if not or if you live away in Leeds or Bradford or some other Yorkshire centre of the woollen trade to-day, it may interest you to know where the old Flemish wool workers met at Cranbrook as long ago as 1344.

To-day it is a splendid type of the old Elizabethan manor house, because the Old Cloth Hall was rebuilt in Queen Elizabeth's reign and was called Coursehorne Manor. The old bricks and the tiles stand out against the background of green fields, and the old half-timbering is wonderfully preserved.

The first storey has that typical form of architecture which caused it to project beyond the floor below, and the gabled roof is covered with tiles that have reached the age when time and weather have joined to make them such a colour as no other tiles can be.

And within this old house are quiet rooms, oak-beamed ceilings, panelled walls and, ingle-nook fire-places such as must have been there when Queen Elizabeth came and saw it. For one day the great Queen came to Cranbrook and laid the foundation stone of the Grammar School there.

And they say in Cranbrook that when she went to Coursehorne Manor she walked along a pathway a

Yeomen of Kent

mile long, and that the pathway was covered with broadcloth that had been woven in Cranbrook.

I have no doubt that every able-bodied man, woman and child in Tenterden, Cranbrook, Goudhurst and Hawkhurst and all the other villages were there to cheer her, and that amongst them was an ancestor of the poor old chap who told me the story about his father.

And after reading about this, and after you have pictured to yourself that ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone and all the Lords and Ladies and Courtiers and local Gentry and the procession along that mile of broadcloth to the Manor, all the splendour and silks and satins—after all this, I say, you too will think as I do that on that day at any rate everybody in the Weald of Kent turned out as smartly as they could.

And now? Gone, all gone. Wool-combers, weavers, spinners, burlers have all left the Weald of Kent.

Work that formerly was done at home in country cottages amidst the fields and orchards of Kent is now done in mighty factories in Bradford and other great Yorkshire cities.

From country village to crowded city, from individuality to mass production.

I am not quite certain when it all ceased. I do not know when the last weaver carried his work to the master who employed him or when the last spinning-wheel was put away in Kent, or indeed in any part of England. I believe weavers worked in lonely parts of Wales for a long time after the work in England had

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ceased in country houses, and you may remember in Borrow's *Wild Wales* that his guide John Jones at Llangollen was a weaver.

"What are you by trade?" asked Borrow.

"I am a gwehydd, Sir."

"What do you earn by weaving?"

"About five shillings a week, Sir."

And in the next chapter:—"In the evening John Jones made his appearance with a bundle under his arm.

"'Sir,' said he, 'I am going across the mountain with a piece of weaving work, for the man on the other side, who employs me.'"

That was in the year 1854. Now as far as I can remember, during the whole of that book he does not mention the weavers of Norfolk, although Borrow was a Norfolk man by birth and very proud of it, almost as proud indeed as he was of being descended from the "gentillâtres" of Tredinnock (Trethinnick), Cornwall, and I cannot help thinking that if there were weavers still doing piece-work round Norwich he would have told John Jones so.

CHAPTER XXIV

DEFOE'S TOUR—AN OLD BLIND MASTIFF—A GOOD
PHYSICIAN—A TANTONY PIG

THERE comes a time on every journey when the traveller must rest awhile. In olden times his horse had cast a shoe, perhaps, and the smith had slightly lamed him in the shoeing, so that at the next town off must come this shoe again and the horse's foot be rested, with maybe some dressing or attention from the farrier, who shook his head at the work of the smithy down the road where horse and man had tarried.

A wheel came off the post-chaise and a new lynch-pin must be made, or heavy rains or floods held up the traveller in some house upon his way.

And when this happened, as it very often did, he would sit and think of all the miles he had covered, of this place and that and of those with whom he had talked or met upon the roads.

And so he had time wherein to fix the many happenings in his memory and to make notes of what he had seen and done.

So to-day we, too, will rest awhile, and as we do so look back, if only for a little, upon the way which we have travelled, and fill in a blank or two with a

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memory that has escaped us as we passed on from one stopping-place to another.

And as I do this I cannot help thinking of old Defoe and that journey of his in 1724-26. Defoe was no young man when he started on that tour in the eighteenth century.

He was born probably in 1661, so that he was well over sixty—a wonderful achievement in those days if we remember what the roads and conditions of travel must have been like.

Here we are in 1935 and that old book of his makes wonderfully interesting reading. I have just been looking up what he says of one or two places that I have mentioned, and this is what he says of Ely for one:

“So we came back to Ely, whose Cathedral, standing in a level flat Country, is seen far and wide; and of which Town, when the Minster, so they call it, is described, everything Remarkable is said that there is to say; and of the Minster this is the most remarkable thing that I could hear, namely, that some of it is so antient, totters so much with every gust of Wind, looks so like a Decay, and seems so near it, that when ever it does fall, all that 'tis likely will be thought strange in it, will be, that it did not fall a hundred Years sooner.”

So if ever you go to Ely you must think of this, and as you look at those old towers remember what Defoe wrote over two hundred years ago, and in these

Defoe's Tour

times when fish from the sea is so plentiful it is curious to read that great quantities of fresh-water fish were brought to London from this country round Ely and from Whittlesea and Ramsey Meres.

“For Carrying Fish alive by Land Carriage; thus they do by carrying great Buts fill'd with Water in Waggons, as the Carriers draw other Goods: The Buts have a little square Flap, instead of a Bung, about ten, twelve, or fourteen Inches square, which, being open'd, gives Air to the Fish, and every Night, when they come to the Inn, they draw off the Water, and let more fresh and sweet Water run into them again. In these Carriages they chiefly carry Tench and Pike, Pearch and Eels, but especially Tench and Pike, of which here are some of the largest in England.”

One can imagine their coming along that long road and the excitement at the inns, especially amongst the boys of the village, when the butts were opened and the fresh water was put in.

And here is another thing of interest, because we were talking of the Clothiers of the Weald of Kent not long ago, and I have just come across what he says of the clothing trade at Guildford in Surrey.

“These Cloths of a middling Price, have formerly been in great Repute, and these again were almost quite decay'd, but by the Application and Skill of the Clothiers, Maintain'd the Credit of their Make, and are encourag'd, and indeed

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revived in Reputation of late years when the Clothiers of Cranbrook and Tenterden in Kent, whose Goods are of the same kind, are almost sunk to nothing, as I have already observed."

And yet only last year an old man said to me, "the people of Tenterden, Cranbrook, Goudhurst and Hawkhurst was wonderful particular about their clothes."

Having read this then, I looked for other places where we too have tarried, and I found that as Defoe took the road through Derbyshire he came to Buxton and to Matlock, where he found the waters and writes:

"We found the Wells, as Custom bids us call them, pretty full of Company, the Waters good, and very physical, but wretched Lodging and Entertainment; so I resolved to stay till I came to the South, and make shift with Tunbridge or Epsom."

But if he did not like the Wells he liked the country of the Vales round Wirksworth, where he found

"the markets well supplied, the provisions extraordinary good, not forgetting the Ale, which every where exceeded, if possible, what was passed, as if the farther North the better the Liquor, and that the nearer we approach'd to Yorkshire as the Place for the best, so the Ale advanc'd the nearer to its Perfection."

Defoe's Tour

Which you will see agrees with what Dr. Erasmus Darwin said about the ales of Burton, that is to say, the question of the quality of the water.

For the water is more important than the barley; a Norfolk farmer told me at a village called Holt in the year of Edward VII's Coronation, that Norfolk grew the best barley and produced the worst beer in all England, due to the waters of the wells there.

And Tamworth? You remember I wrote about old Mr. Guy and wondered why he built a hospital at Tamworth, Staffordshire, when he was born and lived in London? Well, I believe Daniel Defoe can tell us, for he says Mr. Guy built a hospital for fourteen poor people at Tamworth in Staffordshire, where he was "chosen Representative." So you see I suppose he was Member of Parliament for Tamworth.

Defoe also gives a list of all the money Mr. Guy gave away, including one hundred thousand to his relatives, and says:

"How Mr. Guy amass'd all this Wealth, having been himself in no publick Employment or Office or Trust, or Profit, and only carrying on the Trade of a Bookseller, till within a few Years of his Death, this is not the Business of this Book; 'tis enough to say, he was a thriving, frugal Man, who God was pleased exceeding to Bless, in whatever he set his Hand to knowing to what good Purposes he laid up his Gains: He was never married and lived to be above Eighty Years old."

At this date the hospital had not yet been built, and Defoe says:

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"This will I suppose be called Guy's Hospital . . . who lived to see the Building begun."

It is of great interest too to read that by old Guy's will the new hospital was to be:

"for receiving such poor Persons as have been dismissed from other Hospitals as Incurable."

Soon after reading this, for some reason or another I began to think of that old copy of *The Times* which had the news of Trafalgar and the advertisement for the two lost dogs—one the old Pointer Dog, "white with red spots, almost blind, one eye quite gone." And when I had read on a little more in Defoe's wonderful old book I came to this story about a blind dog which seems so interesting that I copied it out, and here it is:

"Mr. Carew, Author of the Survey of Cornwall, tells us a strange story of a Dog in this town (Saltash), of whom it was observed, that if they gave him any large Bone, or piece of Meat, he immediately went out of Doors with it and after having disappeared for some time, would return again, upon which after some time they watch'd him, when to their great Surprise they found that the poor charitable Creature carry'd what he so got to an old decrep'd Mastiff, which lay in a Nest that he had made among the Brakes a little way out of the Town, and was blind; so

An Old Blind Mastiff

that he could not help himself, and there this Creature fed him; he adds, also, that on Sundays or Hollydays, when he found they made good Cheer in the house, where he liv'd, he would go out, and bring this old Blind dog to the Door and feed him there till he had enough, and then go with him back to his Habitation in the Country again, and see him safe in; if this Story is True, it is very Remarkable indeed, and I thought it worth telling, because the Author was a Person, who they say might be credited. . . ."

And as I, also, thought it might be worth the telling I have put it in here, for I am quite sure that very few have read it before.

Of Cornwall, too, he writes something that pleases me, so that this also must be added, and if there should be any Cornishman who reads it I hope he will like it also, for Defoe said of the Cornish Gentry:

" . . . that as they generally live Cheap, and are more at home than in other Counties, so they live more like Gentlemen, and keep more within Bounds of their Estates than the English generally do, take them altogether. Add to this, that they are the most Sociable, Generous, and to one another, the Kindest Neighbours that are to be found; and so they generally live, as we may say, together, for they are almost always at one another's houses, so they generally intermarry among themselves, the Gentlemen seldom going out of the County for a Wife, or the Ladies for a

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Husband, from whence, they say, that Proverb upon them was rais'd, viz, 'That all the Cornish Gentlemen are Cousins.' "

And since I mentioned that Defoe had been to Tunbridge Wells I have looked up what he said about it all, but can only quote a little; he says:

"... see the Walks covered with Ladies compleatly dress'd and gay to profusion; where rich Cloths, Jewels, and Beauty not to be set out by (but infinitely above) Ornament, dazzles the Eyes from one end of the Range to the other."

Also a little later he writes:

"As for Gaming, Sharping, Intriguing: as also Fops, Fools, Beaus, and the like, Tunbridge is as full of these as can be desired, and it takes off much of the Diversion of those Persons of Honour and Virtue, who go there to be innocently recreated. However, a Man of Character, and good behaviour cannot be there any time, but he may single out such Company as may be suitable to him, and with whom he may be as merry as Heart can wish."

.

In this manner then as we rest on our journey we can go over old ground once more.

Old towns, old villages keep coming back, and amongst the oldest of all comes Canterbury once more.

A Good Physician

Something—I know not what—probably a few lines I read in Defoe's *Tour*, made me think of Canterbury and reminded me that I had said nothing about old Thomas Linacre when I spoke of it before.

He was born there in 1460. Sometimes his name is spelt Lynaker; he was physician to Henry VIII and he founded the Royal College of Physicians.

Linacre was the first president of the College, and he was not only a famous physician—of his day—but a scholar, and the whole world owes a great debt to him. The greatest tradition of that Royal College has been that every Member or Fellow should be, not only a physician, but also a scholar.

If you were to read all about Thomas Linacre in the work of Dr. Noble Johnson, you would find that he practised what he preached. He was gentle, kind, courteous and a scholar. He wished that every physician should be the same.

Linacre founded the College in 1518, about four hundred and seventeen years ago, and since then many notable men have filled that post at the Royal College of Physicians; their names will be found in its registers and records.

And about old Linacre, it is interesting to record that as well as being a physician and a scholar, he wrote many learned treatises which were looked upon as being of the very highest quality from a literary point of view.

Further, it is more interesting still to read that he, late in life, followed in the footsteps of St. Luke—as it were—and took up the cure of souls instead of bodies, holding several benefices. He died in St.

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Luke's Little Summer . . . on the twentieth day of October 1524. Four hundred and ten years ago.

Many wonderful discoveries have been made since then, most of which would never have been made had not Linacre laid this foundation stone of study and research.

Long before, and for long afterwards, the medical practitioners were in many cases little better than native witch-doctors! They had secret potions and awe-inspiring effects which they used to terrify their credulous patients. Even down to the early part of the eighteenth century, witchcraft was believed in by many people in remote country districts.

Perhaps the most active time for witchcraft was in Queen Elizabeth's reign, long after Thomas Linacre was dead.

In the last year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth was published a book called *Giffard's Dialogue on Witches*. That was in 1603.

At that time people—so it was said—were much troubled by the works of "Puckrels," which were small imps. Here is a quotation from old Giffard's book:

"She had three or four impes. Some call them puckerels. One like a grey cat, another like a weasel, another like a mouse. A vengeance take them! It is a great pity the country is not rid of them!"

That was only three hundred and thirty-odd years ago! If it had not been for men like Linacre we should still believe in them all.

Old Somerset Names

Just think about it all for a moment; we think we are highly civilised . . . yet only a few centuries ago many English people were little better than natives in heathen lands. Not all of them, of course. That is what gives one hope, hope for the future of mankind, if we have progressed so far in such a short time—for what are three, four, or five hundred years?

Four hundred years ago people had not names, surnames I mean—or very few of them. I came across a list of fourteenth-century names only a few days ago taken from a village in Somersetshire. The list of villagers included:

William le wop (wasp).

William le rat.

William le coiner.

Hugh le Blod-leter (Blood).

Adam le puddyng.

John de Smallfish.

I can understand Wop and Rat because I am sure these two gentlemen—dead these five hundred years or more—must have resembled wasps and rats. So do some people to-day . . . I know several who are very like rats.

William le Coiner I can understand because he followed a trade, and we have no reason to suppose it was an illegal one.

Hugh le Blod-leter was one of our very early barber-surgeons, whilst Adam le Puddyng either made puddings or looked like one. I have heard people called “pudding-faced” not so very long ago. I wonder

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which this Adam was—a pudding-maker or a fat-faced man?

But John de Smallfish? This is a puzzle. Sometimes I think he was a man of no account—"very small fry" as people say to-day; and sometimes I think he was an unfortunate angler who only caught small fish. If he was, some of us can sympathise with him. I think it would be interesting if people were named like this now, but of course it would not do. Yet many people are known by their nicknames in English villages to-day.

But there is more in this matter of nicknames than you might think. Hundreds of families to-day are descended from people who were only known by their nicknames. This is how it came about:

In the year 1538, King Henry VIII ordered that in every parish should be kept a register of the births, deaths and marriages that took place therein, with the Christian name and surname of the parties. Quite a lot of people in every village had no surname, and this new Act caused almost as much trouble as any law that has ever been passed.

To-day the snow has all gone, but a strong south-westerly wind is tearing over Southern England with rain that still is badly needed.

Not a day for travelling, this. So as there is no hurry I will mention one little thing I have just read in a curious old book that came into my hands a few weeks ago.

Do you remember what I wrote about *tawdry* from

A Tantony Pig

St. Audrey? And *Tosey* from St. Osyth? Well, I have, in this old book, just come across another word that was derived from a Saint—St. Anthony.

St. Anthony, who is supposed to have been born in the year 251 in Egypt, had, it is related, a wonderful gift of healing. This was not confined to the human race alone, for he also cured animals, notably ailing pigs.

And because of this wonderful power of curing pigs “they used in several places to tie a bell about the neck of a pig, and maintain it at the common charge of the parish, from whence came our English proverb of ‘Tantony Pig’ or t’Anthony, an abridgment of the Anthony Pig.”

And my book goes on to say:

“I remember,” says Stow, “that the officers charged with the oversight of the markets in this city did divers times take from the market people, pigs starv’d, or otherwise unwholesome for man’s sustenance; these they did slit in the ear. One of the proctors for St. Anthony’s (Hospital) tied a bell about the neck (of one of them) and let it feed on the dung-hills; no man would hurt or take it up; but if any gave to them bread, or other feeding, such they (the pigs) would know, watch for, and daily follow, whining till they had somewhat given them.”

St. Anthony’s school in London, now gone to decay, was anciently celebrated for the proficiency of its pupils. Stow relates that, in his youth, he annually

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saw, on the eve of St. Bartholomew, the scholars of the different grammar schools assembled in the churchyard of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, and the St. Anthony's scholars commonly were the best, and carried the prizes; and that when the boys of St. Paul's school met with those of St. Anthony's,

“they would call them St. Anthony's pigs, and they again would call the others pigeons of St. Paul's; because many pigeons were bred in Paul's church, and St. Anthony was always figured with a pig following him.

“The seal of St. Anthony's Hospital in London was about the size of a half-crown; it represented the Saint preaching to a numerous congregation, with his pig beneath him. . . .

“ . . . St. Anthony is always represented by the old painters with a pig by his side. Rubens painted a fine picture of the Death of St. Anthony, with his pig, or rather a large bacon hog, lying under the Saint's bed: there is a good engraving from this picture by Cloowet.”

Stow—John Stow—one of our earliest collectors of antiquities, was born in London in 1525. I wonder if any reader has ever heard of a pig being called a Tantony pig? I have not, but it is interesting because of the abridgment from St. Anthony to Tantony, and the story I have related shows another thing of interest, that the pigeons of St. Paul's were plentiful at the old Paul's Church and that schoolboys of old

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Stow's days were very much the same as they are to-day.

And the proverb about a "Tantony Pig" was, I think, this: "Such an one doth follow such an one, and whine as it were he might be a Tantony pig."

I think we have all met people like that in our time and now we shall know what to call them.

CHAPTER XXV

A NEW ENGLISH TOWN—ROCKINGHAM FOREST— AN OLD ENGLISH TOWN

I KNOW very well that there are many men who will pretend to others that they can put anything that they do not wish to think about right out of their thoughts; or they pretend that this or that which annoys them or worries them does not exist, and because it does not exist that it can be neglected.

They will deny emphatically the presence or existence of some evil that is only too apparent to others, and will in some few cases even succeed in persuading those to think as they do. Rather, I should say, to think as they say they think, for it is my experience and the experience of many that such men do not really think in the manner which they would have us believe.

To avoid thinking about things that cannot be remedied is desirable, but to avoid thinking about things that might be remedied is deplorable.

To-day there are so many problems which one would wish to avoid contemplating, problems of national importance which fortunately for you and for me are all far beyond the scope of this book or the power of my pen.

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But there are others which, although we cannot discuss with any possibility of solution, can at least give us serious thought and consideration.

Even amongst those that cannot be altered we can, if we look at them from every angle, find perhaps one point of view which will make us leave the subject a little more contented than when we first took it up.

And I suppose from our immediate or our present standpoint nothing seems more unfortunate to those of us who have memories of old English towns and roads and country lanes than the passing of all that went with them and which we know can never return.

Yet even here, even amidst all this that we deplore, there can be found advantages.

The great increase in the manufacturing towns of the North was allowed to go on regardless of the health or the amenities of the inhabitants. The masses of underpaid, underfed, badly housed operatives were forced to live and die in conditions of hopeless squalor.

We turned our backs upon such cities, and nothing was done to help them. New industries arose in other districts and new cities sprang up in a night. Rivers were polluted beyond repair, rows and rows of terrible dwellings were run up to house the workers, until at last the time came that something had to be done.

Slowly as we grasped this and slowly as we are trying to remedy it, yet the lesson has been learnt; and as new industries arise, as new work is being found for the unemployed, public opinion is at last becoming educated up to a standard that demands at least the elements of preservation of some of the original beauty and quiet of the country.

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And when any new industry arises I trust that anyone and everyone who has the least right to help or take part in the laying out of such industry will use all their powers to combine satisfactory living conditions, comfortable houses, gardens and open spaces, with the factories or the works, and that as far as possible the old beauty of the country will not be ruthlessly destroyed.

Now, all this that I have written has been brought home to me to-day because of a man I know well who is just about to take up his work in a place where such a new centre of industry is arising.

When he came in and did a little work for me he told me that he was going away to a county where a vast new ironfield is about to be worked or is now actually working. Neither of us knew anything about it; so far as he was concerned, he had, through a relative in Northamptonshire, obtained a good job and was going away from the South of England.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"Corby," said he.

"Where is Corby?" I inquired, and he replied:

"Somewhere in Northamptonshire where they are starting the new ironfield."

That is all I know, except that he told me that some three million pounds is being spent to open up this industry. And as it is a part of the country I know but very little about, it is difficult to imagine what effect a large new town will have upon the country there.

And when he had gone I looked up Corby in my

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old coaching book, and found it was a village in those days (1826) just off the main London to Nottingham road, about three miles from the village of Rockingham, which is about nine miles from Kettering, and that just beyond Rockingham you crossed the river Welland and entered Rutland, the smallest county in all England.

Corby was two and a half miles from Oakley Inn. Then I turned to the cross roads, and found that Corby was on the Oundle to Market Harborough road, some eleven miles from Oundle and twelve and a half from Market Harborough.

So Corby will be but a few miles from the river Welland, which is seventy miles long and flows into the Wash.

Rockingham, which of course will be very close to the new town, is, says my old book, "in the midst of Rockingham Forest, which is generally believed to have been one of the largest and richest in the Kingdom: it was at an early period noted for the extensive ironworks, and in the reign of Edward I is described as being thirty miles long by eight miles broad."

So you see they knew all about the iron in those days. I do not know what they will smelt this iron with to-day, probably coal from the Midlands, but I should not be surprised to learn that originally this iron ore was smelted by furnaces fed with the trees of Rockingham Forest, just as in Sussex the ironstone was smelted with Sussex timber from the Ashdown Forest.

In Sussex the iron was worked as long ago as Roman days, but the industry was neglected until the

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thirteenth century, when it began to grow, and in the sixteenth century it was very famous and very prosperous.

The Sussex industry seems to have gradually declined, until in the middle of the eighteenth century it had nearly gone, but was still to be found in isolated places so late as 1803.

The Romans called their iron-works *Ferraria*, and possibly the name of Higham Ferrers, not so very far away from Corby, may have come from *Ferraria*: or maybe from a family called Ferrers. And people called Ferrers are descended from those who worked in iron.

At all events, Corby is to be a very large place and will give work to thousands perhaps, including the young tradesman who came to do some repairs for me and who, like myself, had never heard of Corby nor the Forest of Rockingham.

When he had gone I began to wonder about Corby and whether a new town would spring up or the old village of Corby be enlarged, and I looked up Corby in a very old gazetteer of 1824, and saw that in the returns made to Parliament in 1821 there were 207 houses and a population of 581. In 1893 there was a population of 758—not a very large increase in seventy years. I wondered, too, if the great company working there would build nice houses for their workers and give them gardens and open spaces.

For my memory went back to some very old stone cottages and houses that I knew in that county, with long roofs of deep thatch, and how I was told that

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much lace was once made in these old houses in years gone by.

So when I thought of them I hoped the new ones would be nice cottages, and not all huddled together and back to back as they were run up in Lancashire and Yorkshire a hundred years ago, with no gardens and no open spaces for children to play in.

Then I found out the name of the company, and I wrote to them—Messrs. Stewarts and Lloyds—and asked them about it all.

They are a very large company, with a capital of over eight million pounds.

I was a little doubtful if they would bother to reply, but, as I have found so often, the busiest men are those who are most courteous.

I wanted to know if this new ironfield at Corby was the same ancient one that was worked in Roman and Saxon times. For just after the Conquest, William of Normandy built a castle here at Rockingham to defend the important iron-works.

I wanted to know too about the new Corby and about the houses for all the new workers, and if the streams would be polluted by the waste products from the smelting works and kill all the fish in the river Welland, and whether the whole countryside would be turned into a wilderness.

And I am very glad to be able to say that they wrote to me very fully about it all, and in these days of unemployment it is cheering to know that 2,500 men have found work who would otherwise have been unemployed.

They told me also that they were indeed working

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on the old Rockingham ore-field, that they were producing Basic Bessemer Steel which had previously been produced in Germany.

They have not had to build a new town; at the last census Corby had a population of about 1,800, they tell me, and the company have already built 800 houses and some 300 more are being built by other interests. These houses are on sites adjoining the old village. They have endeavoured to give their employees houses which have all modern conveniences with open spaces and gardens, and yet at a rent which they could afford to pay. For economic and other reasons these could not be built of local stone with thatched roofs.

As to pollution, I am glad to be able to say that there will be none, for they tell me that the rivers and brooks will remain in the same condition as they found them.

Large works such as theirs, they write, must to some extent spoil the appearance of the country in the immediate neighbourhood. In spite of all their efforts to preserve the amenities it cannot be quite the same, but in winning the ore the large banks of soil that were thrown up have been planted with conifers, and these are sure to have a pleasing appearance very shortly, and various other means of restoring the ground are being carefully considered.

So you see this is all very encouraging, quite a different story from those dreadful towns of the last century.

I am glad to be able to mention it, because I hope the example set at Corby in the past two years will be followed by other large firms. Men must have

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work, but this goes to prove that beauty need not be neglected entirely.

I have no interest in this great company, I hold no shares and they do not seek publicity, but they have given me permission to make use of this information.

Before I leave Corby and all its works there is just one more thing.

People will say, "Yes, it is all industry now; no more agriculture, no more meadows, and no more flowers."

I know they will, it is only natural, and I have said so myself; but there is a brighter side, after all.

Everyone likes to see a farm well farmed, and you cannot have good meadows or pasture without fertilizers, so it is good to know that from these mighty works will come a fertilizer which of all such things is the best for certain kinds of crops.

Particularly it is good for the wild white clover, or indeed any kind of clover. This fertilizer is nothing more nor less than basic-slag, and basic-slag is produced by what is known as the Bessemer process of steel manufacture.

From Corby will come 50,000 tons a year, and much of this will go on English fields. The clovers will flourish as they have never flourished before, and even the wild flowers will be more beautiful.

I know that this is true because I have seen the wild flowers and the clover in a meadow of which one half had been treated with basic-slag and one half had not.

So you see that Corby slag made from the blast

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furnaces of Corby from old English ironstone will help, after all, to beautify old England.

"Out of the strong comes forth sweetness. . . ."

So once again out of the strong will come forth sweetness, for what is stronger than iron? And what is sweeter than honey? And what do our hive-bees like better than the wild white clover, which is so nourished by basic-slag?

I believe it is partly due to the lime in the slag, and if ever you should go to Dorset and climb up and over Nine Barrow Down from Swanage and go on and down into old Corfe Castle village you will see how the wild flowers, and especially the wild thyme, flourish in that wonderful lime-fed countryside.

So whenever you see a blast furnace and feel inclined—as I have done—to deplore the smoke and noise and all the turmoil of it all, just think of two things:

That many many men are finding new employment after years and years of soul-destroying idleness, and that on many an English field the bees are gathering honey—more honey than they have ever gathered before—because of that basic-slag and that "out of the strong comes forth sweetness."

And now I suppose people will say that with this new town of Corby and with the great increase of industrial population all our old English character will pass from our people. Men will say that the new English will no longer be like the old English.

I am not one of those. I believe our English char-

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acter is still there. I believe that our yeomen are as sturdy as in the days of Crecy and Poitiers, self-dependent, vigorous and reliable as when Chaucer wrote "In his hand he bore a mighty bow."

I know, too, that our fishermen are as brave as they have ever been. Only a few weeks ago Skipper Harrison of the trawler *Earl Kitchener* stuck to the wheel through a terrible hurricane for fifty-nine hours, so frozen, so exhausted that he could not stand, but brought her safely to port and saved his vessel and his crew.

The Skipper of the Grimsby trawler *Gerla*, when his boat was sinking in terrible seas off the Iceland coast in January this year, sent what he knew was his last message of farewells from himself and crew of thirteen "to their families and Old England." All were drowned. So was the mate of one of the four trawlers who put out in a blinding snowstorm to their rescue.

When in February the trawler *Langanes*, also of Grimsby, sank with fourteen men, heroic efforts were made by trawlers from Hull, and again a mate of one of them, who with others had put out to try to save them in boats, was washed overboard and drowned. So it goes on.

And miners? Everybody remembers the fearful disaster in the Gresford pit last year; but only this week three miners with their toes protruding from their boots—they had walked a very long way—arrived at Wrexham and anxiously asked if they were in time to join the volunteers who were soon to go down the gas-infested pit with a view to its reopening. Five hundred miners, all specially picked men, were

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wanted—that number could have been repeated over and over again. No mine will ever be closed in England for lack of miners' courage. No fishing-boat will ever stay in harbour for lack of courage in her crew. This is 1935, but the English character is as good to-day as it was at the Battle of Hastings, at the Armada, or in 1914.

"Oh, yes," people will say, "but these men you have mentioned are different, it is the next generation that will be no good."

Not a bit of it. During the last three weeks, immediately after the above lines were written, I have read of as brave deeds by little children as were ever handed down to us in our literature or history.

A boy of five, David Bennet of Cowick Street, Exeter, fell into a fast-running mill stream at Exwick and was drowned. His brother Ronald, seven, and Frederick Denham, six, jumped in bravely to try to find him, and were only able to save themselves with great difficulty.

Here is another one. Bobby Green, nine, of Blackwood (Mon.), gave his life in a vain attempt to save his three-year-old sister. They were playing in a dis-used quarry when the girl fell into a pool fifteen feet deep. Bobby dived into the water to save her, and both were drowned.

To-day, on April 22nd, 1935, I read also in the *Daily Telegraph* that a little five-year-old girl, Ada Molloy, of Lower Marsh, Lambeth, was playing with her brother William, and George Anderson, also aged six, when she and George fell into the Thames from

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the Temple steps, Victoria Embankment. William Molloy at once jumped in to try to save his sister. He was swept away by the tide, and although he was saved I am sorry to say that the little girl was drowned, and so was a young man, Mr. Donald Olley, a Fleet Street journalist, who dived in fully dressed to her rescue; but the boys were rescued by two passers-by who bravely jumped in after them; they were Mr. Frederick James William Dudley of Canvey Island and Mr. A. H. Collier of Moss-side, Manchester.

This sort of thing is going on every day and probably never heard about, but I have mentioned these four brave little boys aged nine, seven, six and six, just to show that the rising generation will be every bit as good as any that have gone before.

And having gone a little way into this new problem of new cities and new industries, let us go back a little way into the past.

All of us have our own favourite day-dreams, our own favourite town or village or hill or valley.

For my part, having been thinking of all the new towns, I like to recall an old town I know, and recall it as it was when last I saw it but a little while ago.

It was November, and the sun of St. Martin's Summer was smiling through the bare boughs of the ash trees, down on to the golden leaves of the beeches below.

Never a sign of mist floated over the water-meadows, but smoke from a hundred wood-fires, from a hundred old chimneys, rose straight into the air, and even the

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swallows—the eaves' martins—seemed to glide lazily, as if to make the most of this last little summer that England and their Patron Saint could give them.

Below me, as I sat on the hillside, were the roofs mellowed by the years of centuries, and softened into all those tints of red and brown that only the smoke of wood-fires and age can give.

This was but one old town, yet there are so many of them, small, neglected, left behind through some accident of fate, and unhurt, unspoilt, by the advancing tide of man's search for wealth. This old town below me was built around the Castle, and was formed stone by stone, house by house, so slowly, so gradually, that time must have mellowed the old stones of the Castle by the time they laid the foundation of the church.

For they built the Castle first, and built it at this spot because it was one which had always been in danger of attack from those long boats that came stealing up the river on the incoming tides—the boats that carried the shields and Black Raven of the Danes.

Here in olden days—long before the Treaty of Wedmore—men died for the England that they had made their home, for civilisation, and for all they had and loved.

Here on this mound was built the first stone fortress, the Castle that carried with it the guardianship of the rich farmlands beyond.

Here were driven, at the first flare of the beacon fires along the coast, the cattle from the grazing lands, and here too in times of peace came travelling merchants,

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vendors of goods for the Castle and those who served the Castle.

Slowly there arose a house, another house, an inn for refreshment of man and beast; and then, as man became more Christianised, they built a church.

For wherever you see a castle, there near by will you find an inn, a church, and not far away a forge, a smithy.

And let it be said, that the Castle is the oldest building in the old town, the inn next, and then the church.

But it was not always so, for although men always built a town round a castle, sometimes a town arose without a castle at all.

Yet if you come to seek the reason for such a town, you have not long to wait; for many such towns arose by reason of the bridge across the river.

True, in still earlier days there was a ford and not a bridge, but the town, the town that we know, was built after the bridge was carried across the river.

A river, which, wide and deep, or liable to sudden floods in badly drained marshes, forbade, by virtue of its very being, a bridge or ford below that spot.

And since all men, all cattle, all produce from the farms must cross the river by that bridge, no matter how far to the one side or the other they might have come, there was always a coming and a going at that place.

Then came the inn and the town as before.

I will give you but one example of either town,

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because there are so many, and you can find all the others for yourself.

But before I do so let me say that very often there was a castle and a bridge; and the Castle was built to protect the bridge.

In this old game that we play, this searching into the old stories of the past, there are no certain rules.

That is the beauty of it all: we can work along any line we like, and delve into the old unwritten history of our land.

So much has altered—vast tracts of land have been drained, forests cut down, old industries died out and new ones risen elsewhere on the ashes of the old—that it is all so uncertain.

And therein lies its charm, the very uncertainty of it all, the charm that hides itself about those old towns for all who are interested, and for all who love them, to find.

A charm as kind, as rich, as rare, as the last sunny day of St. Martin's Summer.

And of all the towns I know which have been built around a castle, I always choose two, though very far apart, as the best to explain what I have tried to tell.

One, then, is Launceston in Cornwall, and the other Corfe Castle in Dorset.

And if you ask me for a town that has been built because of the bridge, the bridge that followed the ford—I will give you Guildford in Surrey and no more, for there are so many.

And where there is a castle and a bridge, a castle that was to defend the bridge, a castle that was to be

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for the defence of all that lay beyond, all the riches, all the homes and honour of our forefathers, I would bid you seek Tonbridge in Kent.

And so can one go on through all the length and breadth of England.

And as you come to some old towns, their very names so wrapped around in history that they stand out like old friends, remember what I have said.

All along the coast are many more, some still clinging to the memory of a glorious past; and yielding nothing of their old renown to the demands of modern pleasures.

Such is old Aldeburgh, such once was Dunwich.

Not far away stands Orford, whose solitary Castle Keep stands proudly yet, as if the security of all our land were in its charge. And all around our coast, down past Dover, Lympne, Rye, Winchelsea, Hastings and Pevensey, the old, old tale goes on.

But if you are alone, and come at eventide—as I did—to some old town, it may be so old that it is beyond the wit of man to know who first settled there.

So placed amid the quiet woods and fields away from foreign foe, away from bridge where men foregathered in days now gone—that you may well wonder why it arose at all.

So can a man gaze with a great and growing wonder at the old town before him or below him—as he may gaze on to the roofs below the highest part of Shaftesbury and ponder over it at close of day.

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Or he can sit at ease, and rest in peace, under one of those old red roofs of such an ancient town, and build for himself many a fancy tale.

Through the blue smoke of his wood-fire, he will see, or fancy he sees, strange old stories and scenes unfold themselves before his eyes.

Uncertain they are, yet standing out of the blue mists of time are things more certain, things that have not vanished, things substantial, solid and very real. Things that have been handed down to us, to love, to cherish and to hold, and which are left to us out of the dim past. A past from which so much has gone, faded, vanished, like the smoke that hovers for a few moments over the old roofs and then fades, fades away into the great unknown.

CHAPTER XXVI

OLD ANGLO-SAXONS—SOME FAMILY NAMES— IN SUSSEX LONG AGO

THERE is a meadow but a few miles away from that old English town which is called the Cow-lease. I know the meadow very well; it is a large one for that part of England, where most of the fields are small. Four, five or six acres is the usual size, but now and then you find a larger field. This particular meadow, however, is nearly twenty acres, and it has always been meadow—that is to say, so far as we know. There are no marks of plough on this land, no furrows, and, as I said, it is called the Cow-lease.

Cowslips grow in that meadow as they grow nowhere else in England outside three counties, Suffolk, Herefordshire and Dorset.

In Suffolk, where there are not many meadows, you will find them on the “headlands” around the corn-fields on most farms, and they are the largest and finest cowslips in the whole of England.

But what we started to talk about was the Cow-lease, not cowslips, and it was mentioned because I do not think that many people understand what a lot of things there are in England that can be enjoyed without owning. Take this meadow. There is a foot-

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path through it, right across the whole twenty acres, and you, or I, or any wayfarer, has the right to wander across that great field at any pace he likes. You will not meet anyone. If you are there before milking time, you will see a gate open, and the cows will move very slowly towards the gate. Some of them have been waiting near the gate, some are right at the other end of the field. Now you can spend as long a time as you like in that old Saxon field, enjoy all the flowers and birds in the tall hedges and you pay nothing; or you can wander along the banks of the river a little farther away, which has a footpath for miles, right as far as the County Town: a right of way, for you or I or anyone. Our forefathers kept those rights of way open for us; it was part of our heritage and it has increased in value. Those great-great-grandfathers of ours handed down those rights to us: just as they handed down our language. Nearly all our language is Anglo-Saxon in origin; it is neither British, nor Roman, nor Norman-French. Most of the British were driven out of Saxon England, and only Saxon was spoken. Supposing that it is true, as many would have us believe, that the Romans left such a mark on our language and mixed so with the Britons that we are more or less Roman to-day—supposing, I say, that this is true, how do they account for it?

And they say it was because the Romans were here so long, for hundreds of years, and in the later years of their occupation they intermarried with so many Britons. That may be, but the Saxons did not do so; they exterminated the Britons or drove them right out of England. The only words derived from Rome, the

Old Anglo-Saxons

only Latin words in Saxon England, were re-introduced, not by living Romans, but by the writings of dead Romans. Latin was the language of all educated men, all books on any form of education were in Latin. The Scriptures were in Latin, and the Saxons translated them into Saxon, as they did all the other manuscripts. The old Saxon monks and learned men thus reintroduced a certain amount of Latin into the language, but not into the language of the people, only into the language of the learned section of the community. Others not so well educated heard these words and copied them; they thought then—as some people do to-day—that it was a sign of scholarship, a sign of good breeding, to use long words and strange words, and thus impress those who did not know them. I want you to make certain of this; all of you who are Anglo-Saxons, be proud of it; do not admit you are a Briton or a Roman: you are nothing of the kind. All the Romans left behind in Britain was masonry, and all the Britons left behind were earth-works, with the exception of Stonehenge and other remains, and even these, very probably, were not made by them at all.

We do not know; and it is quite possible that the Britons who were here when Julius Cæsar first came, had simply converted them to their own use.

Many so-called Roman roads were here long long before the Legions came. Straight and long they were, leading as they lead to-day.

The Romans cut off a corner here and there, they crossed a marsh or a swamp, perhaps, but they followed the old roads. These roads were not mere tracks, mere

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bridle-paths across vast forests; they were roads, roads for wheeled traffic. Did not the very ancient Britons have chariots? Yes, and many, many chariots.

Later on men removed the larger stones from many of these roads, the Romans had gone, the roads were neglected, the forests grew again, and then there came into being the England of the English, the Anglo-Saxons.

If I were young again, or if I had the time, I would learn Anglo-Saxon, I would teach Anglo-Saxon. I would write about Anglo-Saxon until it was taught in every school in England; yes, and in America.

Perhaps not in every school in America, but in the schools of New England, Carolina, Virginia and Philadelphia. The other schools might come in later.

In some of the old country districts of America they speak real old Saxon words that are extinct or almost extinct with us. Whatever may be in store for us in the future, we are of the same race, the same old stock, from the same old tree, and that knowledge of our common ancestry, of our common tongue, will do more good than all Treaties or Alliances. We welcome them here to see our England, our old Anglo-Saxon home, our Home, their Home, the cradle of our race and theirs. And when all is said, when all is written, it will all come back to this simple beginning.

This old Empire and the great United States of America both owe their origin to those old Saxon souls.

It is, as everybody knows, nearly nine hundred years since the Saxons were defeated at Hastings. Yet in

Some Family Names

spite of all the changes that have taken place in England, many Anglo-Saxon words remain. Of course in many cases the actual spelling has altered.

Take our only poisonous snake, for instance, the snake we call "an adder." Those old forefathers of ours called it not "an adder," but "a naedre"—a nadder.

A newt was called "an efeta," and when we hear country people speaking of "an eft" they are more correct than we are when we say "a newt."

So with family names, surnames. These did not come into general use until the fourteenth century, although the Saxons had names that they handed on from father to son. The spelling has become altered in many cases, just as "adder" has been altered from "naedre."

When England was raided in Saxon days the raiders were called Vi-kings.

This did not mean that they were all kings, although we read about them in history books as Vi-kings or Sea-kings. As a matter of fact, most of them obeyed no king at all. The name Vi-kings meant Wick-ings, and was so pronounced; Wick or Vik being a Scandinavian word meaning a bay (more correctly called Fiords in their native Norway), the Vikings were "men of the Fiords," from whence they came.

There are many people in Sussex called Wickens now, and I think they are descended from these Wick-ings or Vi-kings, some of whom made peace with the Saxons and settled down quite peaceably and became farmers, shepherds and herdsmen.

There were quite a lot of Saxon names, but so many

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of these have become altered. Aluric became Aldrich, and there is a long list of Saxon names in Domesday Book.

I have been told that one of our names of to-day, Elphick, is very old. It has been said that there were Elphicks here before the Normans came, and that the word is derived from the Saxon name Aelfag or Elfag, and is so spelt in Domesday Book.

In those old days a bee-keeper was called a bee-master or honey-man, and if you come across the name Beamster it really means bee-master.

There are still people known by the name of Honey-men, but perhaps they did not keep bees, but only dealt in honey.

All this about names may not appear to have anything to do with America, you may say; but in reality it has a great deal, because you will find people in America with all those names I have mentioned. And as their names, dating back so long ago, have remained, so also has remained much of their character.

Take only one county, Sussex: much as it has changed and grown in population, and with all its enormous seaside resorts full of people from all over England, you will find, if you go into the secluded places, the same old characteristics amongst countrymen as their forefathers had.

Perhaps this is equally true of the Kent coast, and it will, I think, go a long way in explanation of a certain amount of wariness, of hesitation, of doubtfulness about becoming friendly with a complete stranger that is common amongst the people of these counties.

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They are kindly people, but they want to be quite sure you are a friend and not a foe; and much of this is found in the English character generally.

I think that if Americans, or indeed any other people, realised this, it would help them to understand a little better what this really amounts to.

As a matter of fact, it can be quite easily explained, and people will find that beneath this apparent aloofness is a sturdy friendship, if and when you have been found to have only friendly intentions yourself. That is essential. And it is because of this that I have brought in what I am writing. In the South of England to-day are so very many people who have come to settle on retirement from the Midlands and the North; they do not understand the South country people, even though they all come from the same island, and that being so, it can be readily understood that it must be much more difficult for Americans to do so.

I hope, too, that after they have read this they will perhaps understand a little about the character of these South Saxons of yesterday and to-day, a character which has been handed down from one generation unto another.

“The Sussex people are so suspicious,” said a Midlander to me not long ago. Now, there is some truth in this, but I prefer to substitute “cautious” or “wary.”

Looking back over the history of Sussex, one is not surprised to find caution or wariness embedded in the Sussex character. If ever people had cause to be wary

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they were the men who lived between Selsey and Rye.

You must go back a very long way, right back to the year 787, and there you will see how it all started. About that time a South Saxon, tending his sheep on the Downs above Cuckmere, might have seen men coming towards him.

Were they his own people? Or were they Danes? No wonder he was cautious!

Any day, at any time or tide suitable for their long boats, they would come to raid, kill and destroy.

This danger went on for about one hundred and fifty years.

So suspicious were these old Saxons that if a stranger came along and did not sound his hunting-horn he might be shot at sight, shot by a Saxon bowman. Sometimes they came in large numbers, sometimes in small, and now and then these small bands were disguised as Saxons.

All this time the men in the middle of England were safe; they were not near the coast, with seventy-six miles to watch. They did not go to bed within sound of the sea, and lie awake wondering if they would have their throats cut before morning, as many Sussex men did.

Later on, in 1066, came the Normans to Pevensey Bay.

Once again the Sussex men suffered, and grew cautious, until in the year 1386 they were very worried indeed, and grew more cautious still. For in that year the King of France decided to invade England. A writer of that time said: "Greater armaments were pre-

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pared in France than ever before. Not a vessel of any sort from the Port of Seville in Spain to Prussia, that the French could lay hands on, but was taken by fair means or foul. Never were there seen such numbers of ships. When counted there were twelve hundred and eighty-seven of them." Fishermen brought the news to Hastings and to Rye.

The English—and Sussex men in particular—grew anxious. The Earl of Northumberland was sent to the Port of Rye with as many men-at-arms and archers as possible. Watchmen were posted all along the Downs; beacon fires were ready.

On the flat parts of the coast, such as Pevensey marshes and Pett level, men made watch-towers, by filling large Gascony casks with sand and standing these one on top of the other. These were manned day and night.

For months they expected invasion, but it never came, for the wind blew the wrong way, and when it changed, dangers to France at home caused the plans to be altered.

Sussex farmers had a little peace then, until 1582, when the Spanish Armada came in sight, and every Sussex man worthy of the name stood to arms.

Then came quiet years again, but not for long, for in 1690, on the last day of June, the French Admiral Tourville won a victory off Beachy Head.

This was bad for England, and Sussex folk grew very cautious indeed, and were very anxious whenever they saw ships sailing in the Channel. Across the narrow sea thirty thousand Frenchmen were waiting, ready

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on the coast of Normandy, to invade England, to land on the Sussex coast. That they would have done so is quite certain had it not been for Admiral Russell, who defeated the French under the cliffs of Barfleur, boldly chased them in a rough sea along a dangerous coast to Cherbourg and La Hogue, and sank ship after ship, on the nineteenth of May, 1692.

Once again there was a little peace and quiet, but not long enough to forget. Sussex men have long memories, and children in lonely farmhouses heard tales of the days when grandfather was young and waited for "the Frenchies." Before some of the children grew up—in the years 1803 to 1805—troubled days and wakeful nights came again. For now Napoleon was at Boulogne, with over a hundred thousand of his veteran troops, waiting to conquer England once and for all. "Give me command of the Channel for six days, and I will conquer the world," he said. He had thousands of flat-bottomed boats built, so that they could land on the shingle, where there are no cliffs, as between Pett and Rye. But the French were delayed for various reasons: they were busy fighting others on the Continent, and on the twenty-first of October, 1805, Lord Nelson crushed the French fleet at Trafalgar.

The fear of invasion was over once more, but I think all these dangers have been quite enough to leave a certain amount of wariness in the people of Sussex.

During all these years, from 787 to 1805, the men of the Midlands, and "the Sheeres" as Sussex men say, were sleeping soundly in their beds, whilst

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Sussex men were watching and waiting, by day and by night—from one generation unto another.

Somewhere deep down in a Sussex man lies the memory of all this—a hidden memory maybe, but enough to make him wary, to make him cautious as to accepting a stranger as a friend until he knows he is no foe.

Not long ago I was talking to a farmer friend of mine about this.

He said, "Suspicious?" Then he lit his pipe, very slowly, very carefully, and said again, "Suspicious? I dunno' nothing about being suspicious, but with the funny people that you see in Sussex now isn't it enough to make ye?"

Which is, after all, exactly what his forefather may have said a thousand years ago when he mistook some Kent men for Danes. And, strictly between ourselves, that is exactly what I told the man from the Midlands.

CHAPTER XXVII

FROM CANDLEMAS TO LADY DAY—OLD FAIRS— THE OLD MARINE

YEARS ago I set out upon a journey through East Anglia with a set purpose in mind. For this reason it differed from many other journeys where one has wandered simply for the sake of wandering, with an open mind, as it were, where you can turn aside for some chance reason, or no reason at all perhaps, but just a whim of the moment.

Both forms of travel can be equally fascinating, but experience has taught me, at any rate, that the happy-go-lucky find-what-you-can journey has always brought me the greatest pleasure. On the other kind you will meet with more disappointments or, more correctly, such will be your fate if you keep rigidly and firmly to your purpose and refuse, as you should do, to be led away from your path.

But this particular journey upon which I started that early September was undertaken for two reasons: first there was the opportunity of getting out into the country which a wise and kindly old physician had ordered, and secondly because I wished to find out as much as I could about such Fairs as were left in that part of England.

From Candlemas to Lady Day

And when I had collected much information about Fairs not only in the months of autumn, but, having found a comfortable place for wintering, about the Fairs in spring also, I wrote many notes and began to write a book on these Fairs in Eastern England. That book was never published, for no publisher could be found who had any wish or inclination to read it if and when it was finished, and the many other things that had to be done on the resumption of my legitimate work soon caused me to forget all about it. A wasted pilgrimage, if indeed any pilgrimage could be called wasted, and more particularly one that was first and foremost a pilgrimage for health, in which at least it was at that time successful.

So after the lapse of years I have to-day recalled the words of an inn-keeper who had a small house on the outskirts of Huntingdon in the February of that year.

"From Christmas to Lady Day," said he, "you won't find many travellers in these parts or, for that matter, anywhere from Nottingham, King's Lynn, Ipswich, Oxford or London."

And I, having studied the map, saw there what I had not noticed before: that Huntingdon was more or less in the centre of a circle, and that the five towns of Lynn, Ipswich, London, Oxford, Nottingham were situated roughly at the circumference of a circle which had, as I say, Huntingdon for its centre. And he told me that if I would see such travellers I should come there the week before Easter, when great numbers of horses were bound for the great horse fair at Godmanchester in that county, or to Huntingdon on the

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first Wednesday in July, when much wool was formerly sold. To-day I have remembered that the roads to all those places were plain to see upon the map, and having looked at it again I find that London is all but sixty miles away, and that from Huntingdon to Ipswich and Nottingham is very much farther than it is to Lynn, and that from Oxford to Huntingdon is about seventy miles. So that Huntingdon could not truthfully be described as being the centre, after all. Yet he had mentioned all those towns as places from whence travellers came to the Fair or Fairs in those parts.

Still, what he said about nobody being on the roads in February was quite true, and I have just seen in an old book the following rhyme or couplet:

"From Candlemas to Lady Day
No travellers upon the way."

That was written a very long time ago, and it seems just as true now, for I have, with the sole exception of Billy Blew, had no travellers or wandering men call at my door this February. I do not count Billy Blew, because he is not a traveller at all.

For this reason I have had of late no talks with wandering men, and began to wonder if they had all gone for good when I read the rhyme above, and so it all came back to me.

When I was beginning that book about Fairs I said that Fairs were usually held at certain centres at certain times for very special reasons.

Take even a little Fair like Huntingdon, although once it was an important one for wool—that was in

Old Fairs

July, because in July the roads and countryside were not flooded, and travelling was easy for the carriage of wool, and the sheep-shearing in those parts was just over, for this was usually all finished by the end of June.

In Cambridgeshire at Ely the big Fair was in October, just before the floods came, and when the country people had money to spend from Harvest.

Ipswich had, I think, one of the largest Fairs in all East Anglia, in August, known as the Ram Fair, and fifty thousand fleeces would change hands.

But the largest Fair of all, and one which I know has nearly or quite gone, was Stourbridge or Sturbridge Fair near Cambridge. This was the largest Fair not only in East Anglia, but in all England, almost as important in its way as the great Fair at Leipzig or the Fair at Frankfort-on-Maine in Germany or Champagne in France, where the merchants of Italy, France and Spain met and did business.

Our Fairs have gone because of good roads and large towns with dealers in all kinds of wares, whilst the railways put the finishing touch to all large trade Fairs in England, and the famous Nottingham Goose Fair at Michaelmas, where formerly much cheese and many horses, cattle and geese were sold, is now only a pleasure Fair.

Still, Fairs have not quite gone yet, and when one remembers the importance of Stourbridge Fair so long ago as 1548, you can see that it took a long time to kill the Fairs. In that year the University of Cambridge issued a proclamation which was "cried" about the Fair on opening day.

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“No brewer sell into the fayer . . . a barrell of good ale above two shillings, no long ale, no red ale, no sopye ale, but good and halsome for man’s body, under ye payne of forfeiture.”

In 1806 a pamphlet was printed at Cambridge, the “History of Stourbridge Fair,” and it is said to have been the largest Fair in all Europe. Hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of wool, hops and leather were sold to tradesmen and dealers from London, Norfolk and all the Eastern counties.

But now, as I say, all the large trade Fairs have gone from country places, and the roads that carried all the packs of wool and merchandise now carry cheap odds and ends, side-shows for the pleasure-fairs, roundabouts, coconuts and swings, shooting galleries and all the odd characters that travel with them.

It was an interesting journey that autumn in East Anglia, and although I have not one word of the notes I made, I can still remember much of what I learnt.

One thing particularly impressed me, and that was the way that many of these Fair and Show people help one another along the road from Fair to Fair, and how they managed to live in winter.

That year I discovered that most of them went into the larger towns and sold things in the streets, and that many of the old street cries were the same the Fair-people used.

Only yesterday I came across some old prints. One was of a woman selling cherries. She was crying:

Old Fairs

"Cherries a ha'penny a stick!
Come and pick! Come and pick!
Cherries! big as plums!
Who comes! Who comes!"

There was, too, one of another girl selling gooseberries, "Green and ripe gooseberries! amber-berries! ripe amber-berries!" and yet a third selling currants, "Currants! rare ripe currants!", whilst a man with a very tall hat was selling apples:

"Come along, you boys and gels,
Golden Pippins, Nonpareils."

Then there was a gingerbread seller, but what he was crying I shall never know, for, unfortunately, the picture was torn.

Of course none of these may have had anything to do with Fairs, but somehow all those who sell things in the streets seem to collect at Fair times, and very possibly wandered from Fair to Fair selling as they went along whatever was in season if they had not a regular trade.

To-day begins the last week of February, and after days of the wildest weather, with snow and hail and wind and rain and thunder, all is quiet again.

The sun is shining, and although I know it will not last, it will call many an old man from his chimney corner, if it is only so far as his little gate or to see the snowdrops by a sheltered wall, or the first daisies on the green.

The robins mated again long ago, and have been feeding together for some weeks, although all the

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winter each of them has been living in different parts of the garden. Not only have they mated, but have actually started their nest, for I saw the cock with a dried leaf in his beak, and very soon afterwards the hen was carrying a last year's poplar leaf larger than herself.

Now, in all the years that I have known robins, never have I known them choose a place so high from the ground as they have chosen this spring. Perhaps they are afraid of floods, or some strange cat has started to prowl at night or early morning. Whatever it is, or for what reason I do not know, but their new nest is well over nine feet from the ground.

Above the door that leads into my garden is a length of weather-boarding, and behind this—about nine inches or so—they are stuffing dead leaves all day long. My step is strewn with them—oak, poplar, sycamore, horn-beam, beech, wild cherry, many of which they had dropped whilst they were making a firm foundation.

Soon there will be enough to cover the babes in the wood again.

Spring to-day, and to-morrow there may be snow again, but there are one or two celandines out, showing their beautiful little yellow flowers. Yesterday these were closed, but to-day their golden petals and still richer centre are very bright and gay. Catkins on the hazels and the willows are showing up against the leafless twigs, and my favourite early flower of all, the coltsfoot, has come out to cheer us once again. Such a different plant from any other in all England: the only one of its family that grows in this island.

The Old Marine

It was my old friend the professor who told me this and much beside, which I have of course forgotten, but can remember that he said the old apothecaries used the leaves for making cough medicines and that the Romans called it the "cough-plant."

Well, all these things are coming out to make people think of spring, and one old man at any rate thought it would be fine all day, for I had the first caller that has been on the road these many days.

As I said, when you least expect it something will turn up to recall a long-forgotten spot, and sure enough came a wandering man to my door.

Not a real wayfarer this, for he told me he had been in the neighbouring town all the winter.

It was just after lunch: "An old man at the door wants you to read this."

I took a piece of paper and read: "George Brown, ex-marine mends chairs canes chairs mends mats."

At the door was a tall man, bearded, very neatly but poorly dressed, with a bundle of canes and some dried osier rods.

I told him I was sorry I had no chair to cane, and asked him about his work and how he managed to do it, with little more than one hand to work with (for the other had been injured years ago).

He was a marine all right. You can always tell an old marine, and here was an old one, yet upright as ever.

"What do you use the osiers for?" I asked. "Do you ever come across chairs seated with osiers now?"

"No," said he, "these are for mending baskets

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or for mending those basket-work chairs some have for gardens."

So I told him of my friend who came from Yorkshire, and who told me of the chairs in Ely and York Minsters.

"That's true enough," he said, "but it must have been a very long time ago. I've heard my father speak of it. It was too rough, wore out men's trousers and women's skirts, so that they used to have little cushions or pieces of carpet to sit on."

"So they did use osiers at Ely," said I. "Well, I am glad to hear it. And how did you come to take up the work?"

"I was born to it," he answered. "My home was near the place where all the chairs used to come from—High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. My father was a chair-maker."

And he went on to tell me how they used to work in their own cottages right amongst the beechwoods; some would make the seats, some legs, others the backs, and so on. All in their own homes, and then take them into the town to the chair-makers who bought them.

"Now it's all factory work," he said; "but it was a pleasant life."

"So you remember it all," said I, "over sixty years ago?"

"Yes," he answered. "I remember it well; and all the great woods on the hills above Wycombe and the streams and the river that ran beside the London road past the mill, and the old almshouses and the old school and all."

The Old Marine

"Are you going back?" I asked.

"No," he said, "my folk have all gone. I shall move on in the spring—go westwards, I think."

"Walking?"

"No, train or 'bus; you see, I have my box of tools to carry; these I've got here are only what I want for one or two little jobs—if I can get them. And, anyway, I don't start for a couple of months—rough weather coming."

"Have you a pension?" I asked.

"No," he answered. "I had a lump sum for that hand after the South African War. I was with Lambton's Naval Brigade at Ladysmith; but I shall have the old age pension in two years; I'm sixty-eight."

I found a little job for him to do, and off went the ex-marine, tall and tidy and sixty-eight and looking forward to "the pension," as so many old people do. It is not until one knows how difficult it is for many such to live that one realises what a blessing even that ten shillings a week must be.

And when he had gone I remembered how I had once come over the Buckinghamshire hills and through great beechwoods all glorious in early October, and so down into the old town of Wycombe.

There runs the little river Wye, a tiny sister of the great Wye that rises on Plinlimmon in Wales, which is one hundred and thirty miles long. And I thought as I saw it that October day of another river Wye, some twenty miles long, that flows from the Cheshire border of Derbyshire to the Derwent at Rowsley by way of Buxton.

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But the little Buckinghamshire Wye is only nine miles long, rising in West Wycombe and flowing by Loudwater to the Thames at Hedser.

When I saw it, it was clean and pure, and the mill from which it escaped had not then polluted the waters. I wonder what it is like to-day?

Beyond the mill it ran close to the London road a little way, and then by close-cropped green fields with many flints lying upon their surface. In and out of these fields it wandered, and I asked a labourer why the flints had not been all picked up long ago. And he had laughed and said they were much better where they were, for they helped to keep moisture in the ground in hot weather and were good for pasture, so I suppose he knew.

It was, as I say, October, and a little chilly in the evening, for although Wycombe seems down in a valley, it is really but a valley in the hills, and beyond lie lower lands. Still, the mists rose above the marsh, and the frost seemed to be coming early, for there was a cold nip in the air.

There was a fire at the house I stayed at, an old coaching inn, a wood fire of old beech blocks, hard as coal and burning slowly; and here too was a traveller who had come to buy or do business with those who made chairs for which the town was famous and in the making of which everybody seemed to be employed. Besides being a traveller he was a fisherman, and he told me that the very first trout that were ever taken to New Zealand came out of this little river Wye, and how they had grown so enormously in New Zealand rivers and their progeny had multiplied in

The Old Marine

size and numbers until all that distant island was full of trout from Wycombe, and that they grew almost as large as salmon.

He told me of the famous beechwoods, of the ancient town hall and the great church, and that there was—so he said—in this church, or had been when he was younger, a fine painting of St. Paul converting the Druids to Christianity.

Which interested me, because a man in Cornwall once told me that St. Paul had come to Cornwall with those who dealt in tin, and another man had said that this was all wrong, and St. Paul had never gone to Cornwall at all, but to Glastonbury.

There I think he was wrong, for it is said that it was Joseph of Arimathea who went to Glastonbury.

You remember the legend, how he planted his pilgrim's staff on Weary-all Hill; how it took root and grew into the Holy Thorn which blossomed every year on Old Christmas Eve?

I mentioned this to the traveller at the inn, but he said that all he knew was that the painting was of St. Paul and the Druids, and if he had not come to Britain he could not have converted the Druids at all, so what about it?

Which was, of course, quite unsound argument, and I do not think there is any record in the Scriptures of his visit to this country, but when you are staying a night in a strange town it is just as well not to start the evening with too much argument, especially if your chance companion is a very determined man, as mine undoubtedly was.

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And now it is raining again with a strong southerly wind veering to west, and there are floods, the papers say, in many parts of the country.

It seems to me that the old marine was right about the weather—trust a marine for that! And there may be wisdom in the robins making that nest nine feet above the level of the ground; although if the waters ever reached within even nine feet of it England would be but a collection of tiny islands dotted about an angry sea, for the robins' nest is nearly twice as high as the top of St. Paul's above the level of the sea!

To end this, and because there are no travellers upon the way, I will copy out some lines of old Edmund Spenser which will prove that our English weather has not altered very much in the last three hundred years or so:

FEBRUARY

Then came cold February, sitting
In an old waggon, for he could not ride,
Drawne of two fishes, for the season fitting,
Which through the flood before did softly slyde
And swim away; yet had he by his side
His plough and harnesse fit to till the ground,
And tooles to prune the trees before the pride
Of hasting prime did make them burgeon round.

CHAPTER XXVIII

EARLY SPRING—THE WICHNOR FLITCH—THE HEARTH TAX

I KNOW that in different counties, and even in different parts of the same county, people have various ways of pointing out the first signs of spring.

One swallow does not make a summer, and one sunny day will not bring spring, but when the sun is shining in the third week of March, spring is not far away.

Long before the first swallows come, or the cuckoo is heard again, country people find their little tokens of warmer days to follow.

One old friend of mine will tell you that he has heard the "galley-bird" for several days, and that this beautiful bird we call the green woodpecker is usually silent all through the winter.

Another man points to the lesser celandine or the coltsfoot, whilst a third will tell you that winter goes when the rooks begin to nest, when the alder twigs turn purple in the valleys or the first Brimstone butterfly comes fluttering over the hedge.

And though that is one of the things I like best of all—for he seems so full of the joy of being alive—it is not the token that I look for every year. I have

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seen a Brimstone to-day, and he settled on a clump of wild primroses in flower, whose pale yellow blossoms seemed to match his wings, so well indeed that but a few yards away one could not say which was butterfly and which primroses, though the colour is not quite the same.

All these and many more are signs of spring, but it is a little bird who tells me when spring first comes my way. All the winter I seldom see him, and in summer hardly ever, for although he is here he keeps away from the house; but when winter is nearly over his plumage shines anew. White cheeks have grown much whiter, black head and throat are blacker still, and the wings and tail that lovely grey which is different from any other bird I know. Do you know who I mean?

The Great Tit! My old calling chattering friend, nearly six inches long; and his glory is his yellow breast and sides. He always reminds me of an old miniature I have of an old gentleman who lived when George III was King. His black throat, broader in front where the two bands that run round his neck meet, is like a black cravat, showing up against the white, whilst his golden-yellow waistcoat is as brilliant as can be.

Rooks and robins nesting, celandine and coltsfoot, all the early flowers will come, I know; but spring comes back to me on the day the Great Tit looks in at my window, all in his golden vest. Snow may come again, but he came and tapped on my window yesterday, so spring is on the way. There may be heavy snow yet. In years gone by there have been very heavy falls in March; in March 1891 there was one of the worst falls ever known on Dartmoor. Trains were

Early Spring

snowed up, both on the main Great Western Railway and at Princetown. Right on the moor at a wonderful ravine called Tavy Cleave the snow drifted so deep that this great gorge was nearly filled with snow; some said it was two hundred feet deep.

I have known terrible snowstorms in March on Exmoor, and have seen great drifts lie beside the road between Cutcombe and Luxborough well into May.

So I have been thinking of all these things because when spring really comes there will be more travellers on the roads again. Winter has nearly gone.

In October we noted such a lot of berries, and wondered if the old prophecy might come true. Never before had there been such berries—all the oldest men agreed on that—and yet this has been the mildest winter for a hundred years, so that the hollies have carried their scarlet berries all the time, and only now are they falling under the March winds, giving a strange rare colour to the bare earth, unheeded by the birds, who would gladly have stripped the trees by Christmas if the season had been cold.

And now the spell of spring has fallen on some people already, for down my lane have gone two caravans, with gipsies, and a pony tied behind just as we saw them years ago.

I know that people write wonderful books about gipsies and make them so romantic; but country people who know them best are not very fond of them. It is no good at all to pretend, they are very uneasy when gipsies are about, or have made a camp on some waste ground near farm and chicken-pens. And yet

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we like to see them. I know I do. I like to come across them down some tiny lane with their horses and their chatter and their fires; but I do not want them near my house, nor do I want them prowling round my hedges for wood to burn. I know too well the gaps they leave behind them.

And yet, as Jasper Petulengro said in the *Romany Rye*, we are glad to see them again:

“I tell you what, brother, frequently as I have sat under a hedge in spring or summer time, and heard the cuckoo, I have thought that us chals and cuckoos are alike in many respects, but especially in character. Everybody speaks ill of us both, and everybody is glad to see both of us again.”

So to-day as they went down the old lane I was glad to see them. Gipsies on the move. Winter camp broken up, and the rumble of their caravans and cart, and the tall man who ran beside the horses and kept them at a fast pace down the lane for fear of stumbling, all meant spring to me.

Soon they were out of sight, but the gipsies are on the road again and winter has had his day.

So with the coming of the gipsies I feel sure that others will soon be on the move again: someone who will bring memories of a distant part of England, of North or East or West. Who knows?

Or if not, perhaps something will turn up to remind me of some long-forgotten place. To many people there must come a time—as it so often does to

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me—when some chance word or sentence will awaken long-forgotten memories of men, of places, or of things. Try as one will to recall the connection, how very seldom it is a success!

Only to-day a friend of mine came in to see me, and as I see the roof of his house whenever I look out of my window, it is not surprising that I had been wondering how he fared and whether he wished he had gone away to Austria or Italy or the South of France this winter, all of which places are to him as well known as the palm of his hand. And being a man who lived for many years in Manchester, though a Scotchman by right of birth and descent, he pines, not for the cloud and fog of that city, but for the sun that he has learnt to love in foreign lands.

But it was not the great city beneath the Pennines nor the Mediterranean that let loose a hidden memory within me, but a chance remark in which he told me that his wife had burnt her hand upon an electric stove and that she had dressed it with Carron Oil.

Now, when he said that, I immediately thought of the learned chemist of Gloucester, and all the King's horses and all the King's men could not have told me why.

He told me that he was going away for a change, but only to the coast—to the coast of Kent, from which spot he could at least see the coast of France upon a clear day; and we talked of many things: of England, of Scotland and of Manchester; but all the time I was thinking of the old chemist of Gloucester who played chess and lived in that little house in the old city.

And now that I am alone I have just remembered

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all about it. Carron Oil was the cause of it. It has all come back to me now, for I remembered the old chemist telling me that Carron Oil is so called because it was used in the great Carron Ironworks near Falkirk for treating the many burns and scalds that occurred amongst the workmen; it was, he told me, made of linseed oil and lime-water mixed in equal parts.

I remembered him telling me about it, because he had talked of ships and sea-fights and carronades—those short cast-iron guns that were found so useful on board ship in the eighteenth century for firing large shot at close quarters.

And he explained that they were so called because they were made at Carron Ironworks in 1752. You will remember that names of places were a favourite study of his, and he had brought this word in to show me how places give their names to certain things, and certain things to places.

I have mentioned this only because it is an example of how one thing leads to another, and the reason that I have written about it at some length is because I have just met a man from Essex, and something he said to me set me thinking about a story the old lame cobbler once told me.

The Essex man I met is in the nursery business, and he called at my house because he had come to this district to do business with a big nursery that is close to my house. For some reason or another they mistake my house for the nurseries, which is not to be wondered at, for they are not far apart. I have had many who have done so: Dutchmen selling bulbs, all kinds of tulips, daffodils, narcissi or pheasant-eyes as they call

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them; buyers from London and the West; dealers in Christmas trees and gipsies buying tomatoes, cucumbers or chrysanthemums for selling in the towns. Many are the talks I have had with some of them; and the Essex man who came to-day was a man after my own heart, for he was in no hurry, he was a pleasant fellow and he liked to talk.

He talked of Essex, he talked of Epping and Hainault, of Brightlingsea, where the oysters and sprats were the chief support of the inhabitants who once were fisherman all. He talked of Southminster, of the ancient town of Maldon, of the Dengie Hundred and of a certain blacksmith who once lived at a village called Steeple on Steeple Creek who was the first man to grow tomatoes in Essex, and he described the making of Epping sausages, which were, he said, the best in the world. But most of all he talked of Dunmow and the Dunmow Flitch.

He was a very well-educated man, and he told me that this old custom of couples competing for the Flitch of Bacon dated back to 1244, when Robert Fitzwalter gave a prize to be competed for on the condition "that whatever married couple will go to the priory, and kneeling on two sharp-pointed stones, will swear that they have not quarrelled nor repented of their marriage within a year and a day after its celebration, shall receive a flitch of bacon."

And when he had gone I found out what I could of the Dunmow Flitch, and I read that the prize was first claimed in 1445, two hundred years after it had been instituted.

After 1751, up to which date only five presentations

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had taken place, the flitch was not again claimed till 1855; between 1860 and 1877 there were four awards, and three in 1891.

So having read this I remembered that a long time ago the old cobbler had told me a story about a Flitch of Bacon being competed for near Lichfield, which was, you may remember, his early home, and to which city he has now gone. And this talk I had with the Essex man made me think of him again, and so I made a search of all the old books I have, but could find no trace of it, and I wondered then if he had made it up or mixed up Dunmow and Lichfield as he had mixed up Lichfield with Newcastle-under-Lyme when he told me of the strong man.

At last, however, I found in a very old book all about Staffordshire that what the cobbler had told me was quite true, and I am going to copy it out because it is quite new to me and must, I think, be news to many people that two almost identical customs were going on for hundreds of years in England. The place is called Wichnor, and it is about seven miles from Lichfield. After describing the beautiful view from the church, which is built upon a hill, the book says:

“But this place is more particularly deserving notice on account of the curious tenure by which Sir Philip de Somerville held the manor under the Earl of Lancaster, in the reign of Edward III: this was the obligation to present a flitch of bacon and some corn, to every couple, who, after having been married a year and a day, should willingly

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make oath that they had not only never quarrelled or desired to be unmarried again, but would, if single, each choose the other in preference to every person in the world, of whatsoever constitution they might be.

“Whether or not the motives that gave rise to this custom were for the purpose of ascertaining the proportion of happy and unhappy married people, we cannot pretend to determine; but it is certainly not much to the honour of matrimony, that only three couples should have obtained the prize since its institution; of whom one was adjudged to return it on account of disagreement respecting the manner of preparing it for table.”

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That is what the old book says. And now, having found that, I have just come across another account of what I will call the Wichnor Flitch in another old book, and curiously enough I found this when I was searching for something quite different. I read:

“Roger de Somerville was summoned to Parliament as a Baron and died in 1327. Roger’s son was the Sir Philip to whom John of Gaunt granted an estate on condition that he should keep a flitch of bacon hanging in his hall at Wichnor at all times of the year except in Lent, to be given to any man who could take oath that he had not repented after having been married a year and a day, and could bring with him a couple of witnesses to confirm his words.

“Of the few that have ventured to claim the

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prize, three couples only have obtained it, one of which, having quarrelled about the mode of preserving it, were ordered to return it. The other two couples were a sea officer and his wife who had not seen each other from the day of their marriage till they met in Wichnor Hall; and a simple couple in the neighbourhood, the husband a good-tempered man and the wife dumb. So little prospect is there of the flitch being claimed that it is now made of wood and hung up in the lodge."

So there were two places a very long way apart and in separate counties where a flitch of bacon was the prize for happy couples.

In each case the period had to be a year and a day, and in each case there do not appear to have been many successful claimants.

It is interesting, too, because Robert FitzWalter was a Baron who I think was the head of all the Barons who rose up against King John; he was known as "Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church." Who Sir Roger de Somerville was I do not know, but I believe it is the same name as Summerfield, and is found to-day.

Originally the Somervilles came from a place called Sommervieux near Caen, so they have nothing to do with Somerset, being Normans by descent.

I have often wondered if Somerset and summer are connected. The present Welsh name for Somerset is *Gwylad yr haf* = the Land of Summer.

Then there is Midsomer Norton on Mendip. I

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have been told that this was called after the little river Somer, and was situated about the middle of its length.

At any rate it is a very pleasing name, and I do not think old John Wesley was right when he said in his journal that the place was called Midsomer Norton because it was so surrounded with bogs in winter that you could only reach it in midsummer!

And now you see where all this has led me. Back to Somerset again, whether I wished it or no. For I do not want to write about Somerset, I want to go there. I want to go once more to little places that my friends there tell me are the same as when I knew them—even the colour of the roads in some of them.

And because I want to go there I did not want to write about any of those places until I had seen them again, and so will leave it alone now, but some time ago I was struck by the fact that many very old places in Sussex and some of the last of the old Sussex men remind me of Somerset.

They are kindly people, those old Sussex people, who are very nearly extinct now, though in out-of-the-way wooded districts you will meet them now and then, especially in West Sussex and in tiny farms that still linger between Tunbridge Wells and Northiam, Lewes and East Grinstead.

Other people have thought so too. I know that W. H. Hudson did for one. I think it was in "Nature in Downland," writing of the Sussex people he says that he likes them next to the Somerset people, whom

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he loves best of all. I am sorry I have not got his book, or I would look it up, but I know that he said so.

Now, of all the places in Sussex which are not of Sussex at all, and there are many—by which I mean that they have become merely colonies or settlements of Londoners or Midlanders and others—Brighton is by far the greatest of them all.

Yet if one goes back far enough you will find that Sussex and Somerset had much in common, and once upon a time were all part of the one great Kingdom of Wessex, and although they were a long way apart, Somerset and Sussex men very often met.

You will remember that Brighton was once called Brighthelmstone—from the year 1252 to 1810, that was its proper name; although as early as 1660 the name occurs as Brighton.

Then in the old song "The girl I left behind me," written in 1759, you will find "Brighton."

In the Sussex Domesday Book it is spelt Bristlems-tone, and this is, I think, really the same name as Brighthelm. Some old Saxon named Brighthelm settled here and called his settlement Brighthelms' Tone or Tun. About that time, too, there were people called Brighthelm in Somerset as well, and in the year 756 one Brighthelm, a monk of Glastonbury, was made Bishop of Wells. From Wells he went to Canterbury, and was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 759 and was buried in Wells in 793.

Those old Saxons, such as the original Brighthelm, called their homes and lands after their own names, and the Celts called their homes by descriptive names,

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such as forest, wood, river and hill, as you will find in Cornwall.

There are people I know who will say that Bright-helmstone was really Brighthelms'-stane, from stane meaning a stone, but it does not matter.

Somerset men were given places of importance in Hampshire and Sussex. When King Alfred was in hiding on the Isle of Athelney waiting to collect his army, he was helped by a Somerset man called Denewulf, a herdsman.

Athelney is well worth seeing if you ever go to Somerset.

On the Isle of Athelney King Alfred built an Abbey in remembrance of his exile and of his victory over the Danes.

He did not forget Denewulf, the herdsman, and made him Bishop of Winchester. That was in 897, and it was a great position for Denewulf, because in addition to being Bishop of Winchester, he became Lord of the Manor of Taunton Deane, the richest manor in Somerset.

The Church at Winchester had inherited this rich manor in 727 from Frithefwitha, wife of Ethelard, who had been King of the West Saxons.

Not so very far from Athelney I once met a retired schoolmaster who was as learned in all things relating to Somerset, and particularly to Sedgemoor, as was the learned chemist of Gloucester in all things relating to the Cotswolds and his own country, and he told me much about the Isle of Athelney and all the villages around it. Even to-day one can realise what Athelney must have been like when it was an island.

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Flat it is, of course, the country that surrounds it—the meadows always seem to me to be but waiting for the waters to come back again, just as the dry sands on a stretch of sandy shore at lowest tides seem but to be waiting for the sea again.

Corn grows too—grows in abundance, and tall in straw and heavy at the threshing—grazing grounds are rich and valuable, and wild flowers seem to be a little brighter than in almost any other level lands I know.

And for trees there is the willow, willows all the way.

The country here is made for willows, and they grow so very quickly beside the dark still ditches. Then the osier-beds and the reeds and the lanes where elms are standing, and all the quiet of it all is Athelney of old. It can be dreary too, dreary in autumn fogs and winter floods, but even then there is a charm.

Not far away is Langport and the road that leads across the moors to Huish Episcopi and to the church tower there, which is, to my mind at any rate, the finest in all Somerset, standing there as it was when I saw it, one fine September day, as if all the beauties of the marsh were safe within its keeping.

To the north lies Aller, where Alfred met Guthrum so long ago, close to Ham Hill on the edge of Sedge-moor. High Ham, on the other side of the hill, I came to the next day through woods, and so to Low Ham and back to Langport and then on to Somerton, not by the hilly way, but by Long Sutton.

It was near Somerton I met the old schoolmaster, and let me say at once that there was very little of the schoolmaster about him. He came up to me as I was

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looking at a very old house and began to talk about old houses and old towns, and as he talked he pointed to one that had a chimney on each side of the house. That is to say, it had an outside chimney on each wall.

"You will see that very seldom," he said. "As a rule the chimney is built when the house is built, but here you will see that they have been built since, all except the big one, the kitchen chimney at the north end."

"I wonder why?" said I.

"I think I can tell you," he replied, "but very few people will agree with my theory; they say I am wrong—very likely I am—but I believe they were added some years after the house was built because of the tax."

"The tax?" I asked. "Was there a tax on chimneys?"

"No," he replied, "not on chimneys, but on hearths; it was known as the 'hearth-tax': there was a tax of two shillings on every hearth in all houses that were subject to tithes and poor-rate, or 'paying to church and poor' as they were called. It was started in 1663, but was so unpopular that it was repealed in 1689. Now, some people at that time were so annoyed about it that they would only build houses with two hearths, or even one, and when the tax was repealed they added on the others outside. That is my theory."

"It sounds very interesting," I agreed, "but I think I would rather have paid two shillings a fire, for I love fires, I like making fires, and wood fires most of all."

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"And peat?" he asked.

"I have only seen peat used in Scotland," said I, "but when it was dry it gave a good heat."

He raised his head a little and smiled and "Can you smell that?" he asked.

There was a sweet smoky scent coming down the wind towards us.

"Peat?" I asked.

"Of course," he answered, "from the moor, and it is my favourite fire of all."

CHAPTER XXIX

A LEARNED PROFESSOR—A LONG ENGLISH LANE— TWO LITTLE BOYS

*A*N old but very learned professor whom I met upon a holiday some few years ago once talked to me on the top of a high hill for a good hour without ceasing. When I say he talked I am wrong; he did not talk, for by talking one means, I think, that the talker ceases now and then and listens to what his companion may have to say. As a rule he pauses and asks questions, or at all events does not talk incessantly. Not so the professor, who sat with me upon this high hill in Southern England; he did not talk, he lectured, as he has doubtless lectured to many classes of students. And because he said so much and spoke so long—it was, as I have said, a full hour—much of what I heard has been forgotten.

There was, too, a great deal that I did not hear at all because towards the middle of the discourse, or lecture, my head, never capable of remaining concentrated on any one subject for long, refused to attempt to understand what he was saying, and I watched the larks and a hawk high up in the clear sky, and sheep upon the hillsides and distant trees beyond.

So he continued until he had finished, but before

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it had been too much for me I had heard a little of what he said, and some of that I have remembered.

It was not far from the coast, and he had begun by pointing to an ancient embankment or earthwork and saying it was Roman, distinctly Roman.

Then had started this long lecture on the Roman occupation of Britain, and of which so little has remained with me. It has come back to me, a little of it, because I have just had a letter from him. He is in Cornwall, having just returned from Tresco in the Scilly Islands, where he had spent the winter, and he wrote at some length to tell me that he had discovered, since he returned to the mainland, a large stone near St. Buryan which he thought was an inscribed stone, and was waiting permission from the Duchy to excavate it.

So when I got the letter I thought of his long lecture all about the Romans and a little of what he had told me, and I thought of an old lane I know in the next county which is still all that a country lane should be, and is not even tarred except up to the first new house. It is a long lane, a winding lane, that climbs and falls and climbs again, crosses two tiny streams, and about two and a half miles farther on crosses a larger stream where alders line the banks on either side and save many a trout from being destroyed.

This lane has no name that I know of, but I always call it the Professor's lane, although he has never been there. One day I hope he will. There are very few things that would please me more than to hear a ring at the bell and go to the door myself and see him

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upon my doorstep, tall and bearded and with large blue spectacles that make one a little afraid of him at first sight.

How I should like to see him! I should not mind if he lectured, even; for I have much to show him when he ends at last. And if indeed he ever does come, after we have talked, or rather after he has talked and rested, I will hire a car, although I do not like them, and we will drive very very slowly down my old lane, and climb and come down again over the two little streams and the one larger one where the alders hide the trout. We shall stop several times upon this journey and get out of the car, and I am going to show him many things, all of which he talked about that day upon the hilltop.

I shall show him snails and stinging-nettles, and if the season is the right one, I will show him Peacock butterflies and old walls of stone and of brick, and a spot that is called Coldharbour, and a ford that is called Alward's Ford, and many other things.

All and every one of which he spoke about that day, although he had never seen this lane nor even heard of it.

"There are," he had said, "beyond doubt, beyond the slightest fear of doubt, many unknown and unfrequented ways in little-known districts which were Roman in origin. To believe and maintain, as so many misinformed people do, that all Roman roads were straight as a line drawn with a ruler is childish and ridiculous. That such roads existed and do still exist there is no question, but they were the roads built and maintained for strategic purposes for moving

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a vast number of men in the shortest possible time. Joining these, or rather diverging from them, were many others, linking up outposts and centres of agriculture and industry, such as those that existed for the carriage of salt in Cheshire and for iron and lead on the Mendip Hills."

Then he had gone on at great length to tell me all about places called "Coldharbour," and of the snails the Romans used to eat, and of the stinging-nettles they brought with them and planted in gardens, of the Peacock butterfly which he said came with these Romans also, and ancient Roman walls of brick and of stone.

That is why I want to take him along my old lane, because here he will find them all. For when he was lecturing to me that day I thought of this lane, and of how it seemed to be the very lane or ancient way of which he then was speaking, so that I determined that when I got home again I would go there once more and look for all the things he had mentioned, or at least the few that I could remember.

And so I did, and found all that he had said, and I am quite sure that should he ever come—though I fear it is unlikely—he will find many more that I have never heard about.

And because it is too far for me to walk along that lane at present, or to spend a whole day there as I have done so often, I will write a little of the things I have seen so many times.

First of all there is a stone cottage called Coldharbour not very far away. Professors vary as to the derivation of the word, but my old Professor says that

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it is Roman, and I am content to leave it at that. It is an old cottage built of hard stone. I know very well that it was not built in Roman days, but that it was built upon a site which had been called Coldharbour ever since there was first a building of any kind at all upon that spot.

If you follow my lane from here you will find that it is not really a winding lane, although I said so a little earlier; it does not really wind, but rather runs in long straight stretches for a quarter to half a mile or more, and then turns and runs straight again, and turns again and so on.

Soon after Coldharbour you go downhill and past a little wood of chestnuts and hazel, and then through high banks where the lane has been cut out of solid rock. I used to think that the cottage at the top called Coldharbour might have been built of this stone. It is the same kind of stone, but when I said so to an old roadmender he said "No." When I asked him why he said no, he said, "Because it's against nature."

"Why?" I asked.

"See that house down there?" said he, "where that clump of trees be; well, that may have been, but not Coldharbour. And I'll tell you for why. It's against nature, I reckon, for any man to carry them stones all the way up the hill to build Coldharbour, when they could have built it with stone what was to be got at the top. 'Twere foolish like."

And there I agree with him. But the stone must have gone somewhere: hundreds and hundreds of tons of stone have been cut out of that sunken road. But where has it all gone to? Did the Romans take it?

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I do not know, but no doubt British labour was there for the ordering, and it has gone completely.

On the surface of these rocks that line the roadway are marks of picks or chisels or mattocks, and perhaps if the Professor sees it he will be able to tell me when it was cut out.

Gradually you leave the rocks behind, come down a long straight hill and then turn rather sharply to the west. Just after you turn the corner you cross the first tiny brook, only a foot or two wide at most, and it runs under the road in a little culvert.

On each side of the road is a low stone wall that makes it appear to be a real bridge, and on the east side are a few steps, and a little stone well about eighteen inches deep is always full of clear water. Beyond, on slightly higher ground, is a mound of earth covered with short turf where the rabbits from the woodland keep it short with their nibbling. If you climb over this mound you will come to two or three smaller ones, and in between them, not far from an old elder tree, is a large clump of nettles.

Rabbits have made their homes on these mounds, and the earth they bring out with their working is dark and more like garden soil from some old garden than the colour of the soil within the next ploughed field.

Should you sting yourself with these nettles you will not easily forget it, for they are very very venomous, and will cause your arms to tingle, and hours afterwards you will feel a pain all up your arm to the elbow and shoulder, as if you had badly injured the nerve.

When I stung myself I thought of the Professor

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at once, because he had told me that whenever you find Roman nettles and are foolish enough to get stung you will know that they are not the usual native nettle of England.

"Whenever you find these nettles," he said, "be very sure you are on Roman land, but do not mistake them for the small nettle, which is also painful, but which will not have that delayed action which causes neuralgia of the arms or legs to be so acute for many hours."

So when I found that the sting was very powerful I sent some of these plants to an expert, who assured me that they were *Urtica Pilulifera*, or the true Roman nettle, introduced into Britain by the Romans for purposes of dyeing cloth: a beautiful yellow dye being made from the roots if mixed with alum, and a most glorious green dye is obtained from the leaves and stalks.

I remembered then that the Professor had said that the Peacock butterfly laid her eggs upon stinging-nettles, and particularly on these Roman nettles, and he had even gone so far as to say that they were brought here by the Romans, but I do not know if that is true.

I know but a very little about butterflies, but I do know that as well as Peacocks two other beautiful English butterflies lay their eggs upon stinging-nettles, and that their caterpillars feed upon the leaves; they are the Red Admiral and the Tortoiseshell.

In the next field to this old site of a once-happy garden and country home—for such those old mounds most certainly are—is another larger mound, and here

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grow enormous nettles, the ones that come up over and over again on the same spot year after year like the perennials in your gardens; these too will always be found growing wherever there has once been a garden. Even right away on a Berkshire Down I once found a few mounds of earth and a great bed of these large nettles; but, unlike the other two, their sting is not nearly so bad.

So much for the Professor and his nettles; but if you go on another half mile or so through lovely fields of corn or roots or sometimes beans, according to the year, you will come to the next little brook. Here there is a real little bridge, although it is but one little tunnel really, yet it has a proper wall of stone topped with bricks on either side of the lane.

Running up to this bridge wall on the north side is an older wall, and a little farther on the remains of an older wall still. I know it well, for I have sat upon it many times and watched the kingcups in the swampy places all a glorious gold against the early green.

If you look closely at this wall, you will see that for the first two feet or so it is quite different from the upper part, and that there are amongst the stones and bricks some flat tiles of red, whilst the cement with which it is built is as hard or harder than the stones themselves. This, I think, is Roman, but I have had no chance of showing it to anyone who knows. I wish the Professor would come along and give his opinion. He told me that Roman cement was made with cement stones—a mixture of clay, I think he said, with silica—and that it set in a quarter of an hour, but I am afraid I do not remember, because he also

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said that mortar, which was ordinary sand and quick-lime, set harder and harder the longer it was left.

At any rate I feel sure that this is a Roman wall, because of those tiles in any case, a layer of rocks and then tiles and then more rocks; but, as I say, I do not know.

After leaving this little bridge you go uphill again for a long time, and pass between withy-beds—which is unusual, I think, because you find these as a rule on level lands like Ely or Athelney or on islands in the Thames. These are not cultivated now, and many have grown into larger trees, but they are so thickly planted that it must have been an osier-bed once. An old ploughman told me that his father used to cut withys there for basket-making, but it is quite a different willow from any other I have seen, with very long and very thin and pointed leaves that seem to grow in little clumps and clusters on the tips of the branches. I took a cutting from one of them, and I have known a cutting to grow ten feet in a single year, but for all I know this may not be at all unusual with willows.

Soon after this you reach the top of the hill and pass a very old cottage in a hollow by the roadside, where once men must have dug for stone or sand or clay. It is difficult to tell which, but I think it was for clay, because they used to put much clay upon the meadows and roll it in when dry and powdery after frost to improve the pasture and make the surface better for the mowers who cut these large fields by scythe.

And now you will see the larger stream winding in

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and out of the meadows with banks lined with alders. In very early spring their colour is a distinct kind of purple, and when the sun is shining through them it is wonderful to see.

In pools under those alders are good trout who will not rise to fly except to the may-fly in early June, when you can catch them if you can get a short rod between the alders, and many are the struggles you will have, and not a few will you lose as they dart and plunge this way and that and entangle you amongst the alder branches, when all is lost.

These trout are very fat and up to three-quarters of a pound in weight I have caught them, but I know there are many much heavier still: cunning old trout who only come out in evening time. All the summer they feed on caddis-worms, and I have found as many as forty caddis-worms, or rather their funny little cases, inside one small trout.

Here, too, is a bridge, but not a very old one—a good bridge and a fairly high one, for this little river will be in full flood after heavy rain and the meadows covered with water in February.

Once upon a time there was a ford here, and not a bridge, for the old farmhouse adjoining, that stands upon the higher southern bank, is called Alwardsford, and Alward is an old Saxon name.

And as it is a Saxon name, you might say that here at least is no evidence of Roman occupation, but that is not of any importance, because the Romans did not give names to any of our rivers.

Every ford is called after the river, or almost every ford, such as Chelmsford after the Chelmer, Brentford

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after the Brent, and so on; but this little yet ancient ford is called by the name of Alward, is still called by the name of the old Anglo-Saxon who settled there so long ago—Alward's Ford.

I do not think there is any bridge or ford in England called by a Roman name; even Pontefract was called by another name before the bridge was broken.

But it is not of the river, nor of the trout who still live therein, nor of the ford, that I am going to write now, but of the snails that live in and around that farm and garden and fields and banks.

If you look very carefully, you will find a large snail of a rich tawny colour, and you will find him mostly where there is chalk or lime in the soil, as on the Downs of Kent or the Downs of Sussex, or even on the Surrey hills. He has very large eyes—almost as large as small peas—and I know a countryman who says they are very very good. He comes to this spot to find them, and I told him that they were Roman snails, descended from the ones the Romans brought here nearly two thousand years ago. And he told me that he boiled them with milk, and that they were good for all who had weak lungs and bad coughs, and offered to collect some for me, and that I should enjoy a good "mess" of them, but I have not done so yet!

Here again you see the Professor was right, although he had never seen my old lane, for here were the Roman snails, and I remembered that he had told me that the Southdown mutton derived much of its sweetness from the numbers of tiny snails the sheep eat when feeding on the very short turf of the Downs, which snails they cannot avoid eating whether they

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like it or not, but as they seem to enjoy this very short turf, I suppose they do like them, and I know that Southdown mutton is the sweetest in all the world, even better than Dartmoor mutton, where snails, I am told, are eaten also.

After you leave this old ford and old farm with its thatched roof, you come up the hill again, and if you are on foot you will be well rewarded.

If you go by car, as all people do now, and have no time to see anything worth seeing, you won't see another wonderful old farm.

It is right down in a hollow—the roof of that farmhouse is below the level of the road, and the house stands some seventy yards away. It is a perfect picture, one of the very last of the old half-timbered farmhouses, with old oak beams almost black, and standing out against the white of the plaster, for it is all plaster work, so that you have an impression of black and white; whilst beyond is one of the oldest orchards in the county, with mighty old walnuts such as I have seen in Somerset, and in the garden are other old trees, including a splendid mulberry and two medlars, besides a quince or two and apples and pears I shall never know the names of.

So we climb up the hill where the lane is very narrow, for very few cars ever come this way, for which we must be grateful. So few indeed that there is actually a little grass growing on the gravel, and all is quiet and peaceful.

Above you will see a few houses—mostly old cottages, a tiny shop, and then, in an all-too-short half-mile you pass an old carp pond, and then you are close

Two Little Boys

to the main road with all its dangers, all its noise, all its hurrying, striving, nerve-wracking, soul-destroying throng, tearing this way and that, tearing on to the sea or back to London, impatient, ruthless, discontented with all save speed.

You turn your back on the main road and slowly retrace your steps, and as I do so in imagination—for, as I say, I have not been that way of late, although I know it has not altered at all—I think of a house at the very beginning of that old lane. A new house, a house built by a rich man who comes there for week-ends in the summer. It is a nice house, well built and by no means unpleasing, but it is all so very rich. It is all too “nice.” The crazy paving and the sundial, the dovecot and the pergolas and the summer-house are all as nice as nice can be. I am not finding fault with it, I am not jealous of it. I like it. I would not refuse it if it were offered to me, but I should like to turn a flock of sheep into it first, or a bullock or two, or a flock of geese, just to take the newness off the paths and lawns and standard rose-trees, all in stately array like soldiers on parade. I should like to see the varnish off the summer-house and the garden seats moved away and lots of other things—even the electric lights in the garden; they too must be the first things to go for good.

But, as I say, it is beautifully kept, and the roses are a joy: all kinds, but particularly the ramblers on tall standards; yet even here they are far too formal, and give one the impression that they have all been drilled for years or have been “permanently waved.”

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Yes, that is the first new house in the lane, and I do not think there will be any more for a long time, because all the land belongs to a wealthy landowner who loves his land and will not sell. I wish there could be more like him. So that is the first house, and as I came by one summer evening I saw a nurse and two little children, a boy and a girl, playing on the lawn. They were not romping, they were quite happy; but they, too, were a little like the sundial and the standards and the summer-house and the dovecot. There was a dog too, a Pekinese; he was not playing either, but he too seemed quite happy, or rather contented. I watched them all for a few minutes, but I heard no little shouts and no real laughter—they were just a little too sedate.

And now that we have reached the end of the lane, just before you come to the carp pond, I want to tell you of a very poor cottage, the last little house in the lane.

There is no garden in front, or hardly any garden—just a round bed with a few double daisies, and in the middle a very old lilac tree; but on the wall was a rambler rose. A very poor old rose tree who felt the full force of all the winds that blow, for this is a very exposed spot just here. On this tree was one spray with flowers on it—a Dorothy Perkins it was, there were only these few flowers.

Standing in the garden were two tiny boys, one about six, the other a little over four. They were looking up at this rose tree, and the older one was saying: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, beautiful roses. Coo! ain't it pretty? Ain't they fine?"

Two Little Boys

And the younger one said: "Seven roses, ain't they pretty?" and then they started to jump and wrestle and break away and run and meet and wrestle again, and a little mongrel sheep-dog puppy ran and jumped and played and barked, and they were as happy as two boys and a dog could be.

When I passed the last house in the lane on my way home, the grass had been cut with a motor lawnmower and two men were carrying the garden seats into a large shed for the night. A great Rolls was purring very gently outside the gate, and the whole house was suddenly a blaze of electric light, but I don't believe those two children with the Pekinese and all those well-trained rose-trees were really any happier than the two little boys with their poor old Dorothy Perkins, with its seven roses, their daisies and their little mongrel dog.

So we have been along the old Professor's lane and seen his nettles and his snails and his relics of old Rome, and been by Alward's Ford, and as we think of all those changing years we remember those mounds of green turf and the nettles that show where once was some old house: some old house, whether of rich or poor we cannot say, but there are children at each end of this old lane—and so there always have been, and so it goes on from old England to young England, from one generation unto another.

And I hope that if the Professor comes to see me he will come before these lines are in print, so that I can correct any mistakes I may have made.

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Should he come across this book and read this chapter, and then come and see me, I should be a little nervous if I saw him on the doorstep, for he is, as I say, a tall man, though elderly, very active in body and mind, and a little irritable at times. But whether he comes before this is printed or whether he comes afterwards, I do not mind so long as he comes at all, for of all the people I have ever met, nothing would please me more than to see him at my door—blue glasses, white of beard, and fierce of eye.

CHAPTER XXX

THE COBBLER'S MAP AGAIN—NORFOLK—WAYFARING
FOLK

TO-DAY I have been looking at the Cobbler's map again, and I will tell you why. I have taken it down from the wall and the old map out of its frame very very carefully, because the frame is too old to hold together any longer.

"That frame," he had told me, "is a tidy bit older than the map. I've patched it up more than once."

To-day it will not stand patching up any longer—it is past repair, finished. And as I say that to myself I think of the Cobbler, and remember that I have heard him say it, not about the frame, but about shoes or boots.

"Past repair, I tell you," I have heard him say, rather irritably, "finished, perished, wore out," and he would run his fingers between the uppers and the soles and show the state of the leather, and then drop the old shoe or old boot on his bench and go on hammering. As with shoes, so with the frame, and I am having a new frame, whether I shall like it or not. So the map is going to the maker of frames, and there will be a bare place on my wall, but I hope it will not be for long.

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And as this is almost the end of the book, I shall not want it for the present, so I have rolled up the old map, and as I did so I thought of that saying of Pitt after the battle of Austerlitz:

“Roll up that map,” he said, pointing to the wall, “it will not be wanted these ten years!”

I know that I shall want mine long before that—not for another book perhaps, but for old times’ sake.

And as I rolled it, by a curious chance the last county of England I saw was Norfolk standing out into the North Sea.

Not a bad county to see at any time, and one that has its traditions and as much right to history as Devon, but at this moment no county could be more appropriate, because of what I have just written about Pitt.

Forty-one days before Austerlitz, had been fought the battle of Trafalgar, and with Trafalgar Napoleon’s dream of invading England had gone for good.

“England has saved herself by her courage,” said Pitt; “she will save Europe by her example.”

So whenever I see Norfolk or a map of Norfolk I think of one man—Lord Nelson—that is why it is good to see Norfolk again, even if it is only when you are rolling up an old map.

Now, on this map there are only nineteen names in all Norfolk. It was a county that was very much out of the way in those days, except for one thing. And there is one name amongst those nineteen that you would not see to-day if you drew a map of Norfolk and put in hundreds of places that are well known in that

Norfolk

county, for there are hundreds of places that are so very much larger.

But before I tell you why, I want to tell you about a man I met once in the little village of Blakeney in Norfolk.

It was in the days when there was not a motor car in all Norfolk, and this man told me that day in Blakeney that Captain Marryat had lived at Langham, but two miles away, and had written many of his stories there.

So I went on to Langham where four roads met and into the inn there, and here I met another man, an old sailor, who talked of Nelson and of other famous sailors. He told me to go on to the little village of Cockthorpe, but two miles farther on, and see the place where two of our most famous admirals were born—Sir John Narborough and Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and then to go on to Salhouse and see that, because Sir Christopher Mings was born there.

And he told me this; he said, "They all went to sea as cabin-boys. Every man-jack of them. From cabin-boys to admirals all. Sir Christopher Mings, who was killed fighting the Dutch, had as cabin-boy John Narborough, later to be Admiral Sir John Narborough, and Sir John Narborough had a cabin-boy who became Sir Cloudesley Shovel. There, my lad," said the old sailor, "what d'you think o' that? Norfolk men all. Admirals all. And all born within a few miles in the same century, and one of them, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, buried in Westminster Abbey, whilst Lord Nelson, as I told you, was born at Burnham Thorpe, not so very far away. Here's to them!"

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I think that even Devonshire men must think that this will take a deal of beating.

And as I write I am reminded of how one day but a little while ago I was standing in the ancient fishing town of old Hastings and looking at a very old timbered house.

"That be where Sir Cloudesley Shovel were born," a fisherman told me; "'tis called Sir Cloudesley Shovel's house."

And when he said this I remembered that day in Norfolk, and I very gently told him that I thought he must be mistaken, but he was so certain about it that I had not the heart to tell him he was wrong.

Since then I have heard that it was the Admiral's mother who lived in that old house, and that he would come and visit her there.

Thus I have been led away from writing of that little village which is marked with such importance as one of the nineteen towns of Norfolk, but even now, before I do so, I have remembered something I once read about Nelson when he was a boy, and it may be of interest.

Nelson's mother died when Horatio was only nine, leaving eight children; her brother was Captain Maurice Suckling, R.N., and he promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years later, when Horatio was only twelve, and very delicate indeed, he asked if he might go to sea with his uncle, then in command of the *Raisonnable* of sixty-four guns.

"What," said the uncle in reply, "has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that he should be sent to rough it at sea? But let him come, and the first time we go

Norfolk

into action a cannon ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once."

Here, like the old conjurers who used to bring rabbits out of a hat, I will bring out the name of that little place, the one that is included in those nineteen names. It is Worstead. To-day it is quite a tiny place, but that little village three miles from North Walsham is the original home of all the worsted manufactories of England.

In the reign of Henry I, parts of Flanders were so flooded that the people had to find new homes. Some of them came over and settled at Worstead. Here they introduced a new method of wool working by what was called combing instead of carding. In the combing method the wool is drawn out to its full length, in carding it is much shorter, as it is broken in the process. So these earliest Flemings in that tiny village were the people who first started the great industry of worsted. That is why Worstead is on the old map.

And so we leave Norfolk, travelling if we can by one of those long quiet rivers or all through the broads before the holiday crowds come back again. Past old reed-thatched houses and even reed-thatched churches, by level meadows with high banks and windmills on every side.

Old mills to drain the marshlands, and which you will see on a misty morning standing out like light-houses over a calm sea. Go along quietly by Waveney River and the "new cut" from St. Olave's Bridge to Reedham, where it joins the Yare, and up and on all

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the way to Norwich, if you will, or past it on foot all the way to little Shipdham, where it rises fifty miles from Breydon Water.

Or if you are one of those very quiet anglers who like the kind of fishing which is the most peaceful of all, then here all around you are places after your own heart, with the reeds and all the little birds that seem to hide within them.

And since there are so many places to see, and all so good that it is not possible to place one better than others, and since all these Norfolk rivers great and small have each a charm of their very own, yet I will just mention one.

On the Norfolk Ouse it is, a river that holds many fish, and the little town you must seek is Downham Market some eleven miles from King's Lynn.

And since I too have enjoyed many quiet days and early mornings and late evenings at this old kind of fishing, I will tell you of a place that I know that has fish in plenty, and the water runs deep. It is a place called Denver, and I will tell you not to leave your fly rod behind you, but to take it with you, and should you catch a sea-trout in Denver sluice you may find he is a heavy one; and I have mentioned this spot out of so many because I want people to know that there is a chance of a nice sea-trout. Yes, and brown trout as well in more than one Norfolk river; so if you go to Denver you may, if you do not catch one, at least have the pleasure of seeing a sea-trout leaping in Denver sluice, and if you see a big sea-trout leap with the sun shining on his wonderful sides, you will have seen a

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thing of beauty, whether you are a fisherman or not.

It is a long time since I was there, and yet I suppose the river will not have altered very much—at all events I hope it has not, and I hope that you too will see a sea-trout.

So the old map is off to the frame-makers, and I have had no line from the Cobbler, neither have I seen any wandering men for some long time now, only the gipsies who went so gaily down the lane. Still, Lady Day has come and gone, and the sun is rising earlier, and I do not think it will be very long before someone comes my way.

And right at the end of this, like the old conjurer, I am going to bring another rabbit out of my hat, even if it is but a tiny one.

Only this morning I was talking to a man who was working in the road, building or rather repairing a wall, and I said to him, "You don't see as many gipsies and travelling people nowadays as you did when you were young, do you?"

And he said, "No, you're right; I reckon it's because of the motors. Now, when I was a lad we used to have two or three runagates a week come over the Forest."

"Two or three what?" I asked.

"Runagates," he answered, and went on with his work.

Now, I have never heard that word before. As you will have guessed by now, I have talked to all kinds and

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all conditions of people all over England, but I had never heard that word before.

"What do you call a runagate?" I asked.

He looked at me in astonishment. "A runagate? Why, a runagate . . . that's what they be, runagates."

"I see," said I; "never heard it before."

He went on with his work, but I could tell by the look in his eye and the way he pressed the mortar with his trowel that he thought me a bit simple, to say the least of it. Very possibly you who read this will agree with the man who was mending the wall, but I cannot help that, as I had never heard or read that word before.

Now, my nearest neighbour, who is eighty-two years of age and a retired sergeant of police, happened to be working at his gate when I came by.

"What sort of a man is a runagate?" I asked, after we had talked of frosts and apple blossom and so on.

"Runagates?" said he; "why, some be all right and some's all bad."

"But what do they do?" I asked.

"Nothing," he laughed, "except go tramping about."

"A tramp," said I.

"You've got it," said he.

As I say, I had never heard the word before. One lives and one learns. Now I have looked it up in my dictionary, and it says: "Runagate—*A fugitive, apostate.*"

Somehow the word seemed like Renegade, so I looked that up and I read: "*An apostate from the faith,*

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a revolter to the enemy, a vagabond.” And then it seemed to me that the word had a French or a Norman-French sound to it, and I looked up the only French dictionary I have, and I read “*Renégat—Runagate.*”

So it must be quite a well-known word after all, and it only shows that one lives and learns, and what a lot there is to learn, to be sure!

And to end this, I who have always been a bit of a vagabond so far as wandering goes, am glad that at last justice is to be done to the poor man who has to sleep out, because he has nowhere to lay his head and no money to pay for a night’s lodging. No longer will it be a crime to be found sleeping out “with no visible means of support,” whilst the man with money in his pocket can sleep where he likes.

And it may come as a surprise to many to know that sixteen hundred and twelve such poor persons were charged with that offence last year, but now the workless man and the poor wayfaring man will be prosecuted no more, so long as he is not doing damage, of course.

And because many of these wanderers are quite different from the regular tramp, and are very often tired and cold and hungry, I am reminded of some verses I read a long time ago:

“Four good walls and a roof that’s sound,
A nice square piece of garden ground,
A little shaw of underwood
South to the sun, with a view that’s good.
With these a hill, some trees, a spring,
Remember poor folk wayfaring.

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And if some wandering soul should stray
To watch your merry wood-fire's play;
Take from your kitchen cup and plate
And greet the stranger at your gate.
Who knows but from the cold and rain
You may an angel entertain?"

CHAPTER XXXI

THE END OF THE JOURNEY—A REFRAIN

AND now we have almost reached the end, the very end, of our journey, you and I.

I say "you and I" purposely, because although I hope more than one will read this book, there will be only one "You" and only one "I" as these words are read, whoever and wherever you may be.

Well, we have wandered about a bit, over a lot of England, and as you are reading as far as this anyway we have not quarrelled very much.

So, as we are still wandering on, looking for the next sign-post to tell us the way to our last night on the road, let us talk a little. Let us talk of the days when there were no cars, or only very few, of those days we read about when coaches raced to London, of the high gigs and the loaded wagons.

Of those long stretches of open road through quiet villages, and then up and over the Downs—roads like the one that ran from Petersfield to Winchester, and which has altered less than almost any road I know.

Let us think of the top of the long hill you reached at last and the first few lights in the old town down below. Of dark nights on country roads. Dark lanes

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overhung with high banks and trees that shut out the stars. Long lanes that wandered on and made one wonder if one was ever coming out of them at all, and then at last the wider road and the little strip of green and the sign-post.

Matches that were struck in the dark as you spelt out the letters, and almost the whole box gone, perhaps, before you found the name you wanted.

And then do you remember that sometimes you had turned round, only to realise that you had forgotten to make quite sure which arm it was that held the place you sought?

It may come back to some of you, those nights on the lonely roads, but not to many. This is something that can never happen again; yet, lost as it is, the memory remains. All older men who loved the quiet ways can have that memory, and with it the consolation that however rich others may be, however fast they speed along in their luxurious cars, they can never have the joy of the road as once it was. Yet some of you who read this may well wonder what joy there could be. Tired, doubtful of your way, and a rough and stormy night.

But there was a joy, a joy that one will never forget. The joy of a long day in the open air, and at last the joy of the journey's end: another mile or so and then comfort and rest.

Winding roads, tree-lined roads, quiet roads; and now?

On so many roads an abomination of desolation. For on this new by-pass not a tree will be found beside

The End of the Journey

the way. All is bare and sad and dreary. All for speed. Speed conquers, conquers all, except . . . Death . . . Death wins in the end.

And as on this road so on others, as in one county so in others.

How long, I wonder, will that wonderful old red sand-banked lane be left that runs up to the gates of Cowdray Park in Sussex? It has a beauty that can never be replaced, but I know that it will go.

And Petworth? The nearest approach to an old mediæval town that is left in all England, that too will go. I know very well that some of it must go, but if it must, make your by-pass so that you leave beauty, do not destroy beauty . . . just to save a mile, so that some rich man or woman or heedless youth can have the satisfaction of sitting down to lunch at Salisbury or Andover or Winchester a few minutes earlier than they could a year or two ago.

For this is not progress, it is vandalism.

And as it is with the old roads so it is with many of the old inns. Some that were a joy to see and a greater joy to stop at, have been pulled down, and in their place are terrible modern buildings, petrol pumps and advertisements. Instead of old chimneys and roofs of thatch or age-coloured tile are slate roofs and glaring signs.

The cosy parlour where the village tradesmen would meet is now a "lounge" with silly little tables. Honest ale has given way to cocktails, and the youth of the neighbouring town bring their girls on motor bicycles

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to dance to gramophone, or the wireless blares the inevitable and unending syncopation.

Yet men who still seek the quiet ways tell me there are many left, especially amongst the hill-country and lonely places far from seaside towns.

And I trust that if ever we go wandering again by little lane and path we shall find at least one or two of those old places which we knew, and which we loved when we were a little younger and the hills were not so steep. A little farmer or two, the carter and the game-keeper, the shepherd and his dog, the blacksmith, carpenter, old hurdle-maker, these were men indeed, men who loved a quiet chat and sat for hours with talk of farm or garden, of crops and fruit and early peas and still earlier potatoes. Of moving trout, of chub beneath the alders, of this or last year's rains or floods and times of long ago.

No heavy drinking place this, but rest and refreshment for mind and body, the interchange of thoughts and ideas, with now and then a merry meeting.

With such as these, with aged grandfathers, lean and learned in all things of the country, how many kindly evenings have we not spent, and received a welcome that was as true and honest as their own strong work-worn hands?

I like to think of them as the old yeomen, the yeomen of England, and as I do there come back to me memories of them all, of many little kindly acts and thoughts, and of more than one old tombstone in some tiny churchyard "To the memory of — —, Yeoman."

The End of the Journey

The cars stream along the old highway, the gramophones and the wireless drown the old musical voices . . . there is no place in that inn for the grandfathers, the little farmers, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the shepherd and his dog. This is not the place for them, and they know it . . . and it is not the place for you or for me.

We must go on, and somehow I seem to know that one day we shall find the inn we seek again: Quiet, standing back from the road, a welcome and good fare, a cosy fire and a good night's rest, such as we knew so often in the days that seem so long ago.

But although so many roads and old inns have gone for you and for me, yet we can cheer ourselves with this, that if ever we go for another journey there are plenty of field-paths left. There are still the Sussex Downs, Exmoor, the Berkshire Downs, Salisbury Plain, Dartmoor, Savernake and many other places where little homes lie hidden in the hills; long may they last, and I wish you all good travelling.

And on the last day of every journey I always like to know before I set out that I shall have a comfortable resting place that night.

On any other night I would take my chance—it is all in the way of the road—but on that last night it is good to know that you will be sure of a good meal and a good bed at some place you have heard about.

For the best thing of all is the end of the journey—or almost the end.

A little tired, perhaps, but not too tired, and night

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has already fallen: a clump of trees, a house or two, loom up out of the dimness. You hear the clomp of horses' hoofs on the cobbles of some old farm stable and catch the gleam of a moving lantern and a voice across the yard.

Then all is quiet again, the scent of wood-smoke, a light or two, footsteps coming nearer—rather tired plodding footsteps, but coming on steadily.

"How far to Milvercombe?" you call out.

"You're in Milvercombe now."

"How far to the White Lion, then?"

"Matter o' half a mile or less and . . . they be expecting you. . . . Good-night!"

"*And they be expecting you*"—There! that's put fresh life into you; you quicken your step, and visions of lights, a wood fire and a table laid. . . . For "*they be expecting you*."

You're in the real country after all; you are not one of a crowd, you will be the only guest or guests, and this man knew it.

You would like to run back and take him by the hand, but you don't. You catch the scent of his tobacco, and out in that dark evening—it's raining a little too—you like the smell of his pipe, and it seems to blend with it all.

There is the White Lion, lights in the window, and, yes, there are red curtains to the downstairs rooms; cheerful they look to-night with the light shining through them.

In at the door, the hum of voices, countrymen's voices, warmth . . . no gramophones, no wireless, a

A Refrain

jolly-looking landlord, a dog or two . . . and the last night on the road.

That is the end of the real journey, or has, I know, been the end for me and for some of you as well, but for you and for me now, how can we end this one?

We are not out on the road—you and I—instead we are at home and just pretending, but since all journeys must end—even such a journey as this, which I know was really no journey at all—let us end it with a wish.

After all, I started it with a wish when I hoped that wandering men might come my way and call at my door with a tale to tell.

And though beggars still go walking and no wishes make them ride, yet I will wish once more.

So here is my wish or my hope, for what is there to choose between them?

And I hope that someone somewhere has enjoyed this journey about old England, jumping from county to county and town to town, and I hope that very soon you and I may go wandering again in reality.

But if you are unable to go wandering as you would like to do, I hope that out of all the odds and ends that have crept into these pages there may be just one thing that will recall the memory of happy days when a few more miles at the end of the day meant nothing to you at all. Just one memory.

And if these lines should fall into the hands of someone abroad who hears nothing but a foreign tongue

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and never a word of English, I hope that amongst them there may be something they will have liked.

And if not, here is one more chance, here is something that I have not written myself, but some verses that of all the things that I have read seem to me to tell the tale of England to those who are far away. They are by the Rev. A. S. Cripps, who has written from Mashonaland to tell me I may use them, so here they are:

A REFRAIN

Tell the tune his feet beat
On the ground all day—
Black-burnt ground and green grass
Seamed with rocks of grey—
“England,” “England,” “England,”
That one word they say.
Now they tread the beech-mast,
Now the ploughland’s clay,
Now the faery ball-floor of her fields in May,
Now her red June sorrel, now her new-turned hay,
Now they keep the great road, now by sheep-path stray,
Still it’s “England,” “England,”
“England” all the way!

Now our journey ends: and as I look back along the old roads and remember old names, old towns, and old days, the last lines of one of Austin Dobson’s poems come back to me as well:—

“Old books, old wine, old Nankin blue:
All things, in short, to which belong
The charm, the grace that Time makes strong—
All these I prize, but (*entre nous*) . . .
Old friends are best!”

A Refrain

And so I put another log on my fire, for the wind is nearly northerly again and there may be snow in the morning, fill my pipe and wish once more.

I wish you:—

“Old wine to drink, old wood to burn, old books to read, and old friends to converse with.”

CONCLUSION

A WEEK ago to-day I came across the Night-Watchman.

"Ere," he said, "I want to have a word along o' you."

He was standing behind his shelter splitting some wooden blocks for his fire.

"I did not know you were working here," I told him.

"No more I was till yesterday," he answered, "and I shall be off again next week. They're opening this road Wednesday; we're packing up, that's all. How d'you get along with that book, that's what I want to know? Have you wrote it yet?"

"Yes," said I.

"Have you put in a bit about the country, and old sort of places and robins and that?"

"Yes," said I again.

"And lost dogs? You couldn't find none this time, could you?"

"Two lost dogs," I answered, "and robins and old sort of places."

"Places what you and me may never see again," he said slowly; "but after all, Mister, you and me is getting old . . . leastways I feel like it, don't you?"

"Yes," I agreed, "I do."

Conclusion

"Still, when all's said and done," he went on, "there's no place like home, is there?"

"No," said I.

"A roof over your head, and a cosy fire, and . . . home sweet home, but . . ."

"But what?" said I.

He did not answer, and we sat in silence for a few minutes, and then:

"If I were young," he began, sighing a little, "I'd . . ."

"What would you do?" I asked.

"There's a lot o' places I ain't never seen," he said regretfully—"Durham and Derby and bits o' Gloucestershire; but instead of that I have to stop home all day and sit in here all night." He lit his pipe very slowly and then smiled. "Still, I may see them yet; after all, you and me ain't so very old. And here's another thing. I'll tell you what I always liked best, I'll tell you and no story, what miles I walked the quickest—"

"Which?" I asked.

"The last two miles towards home," he answered at once. "That's what I liked best of all."

